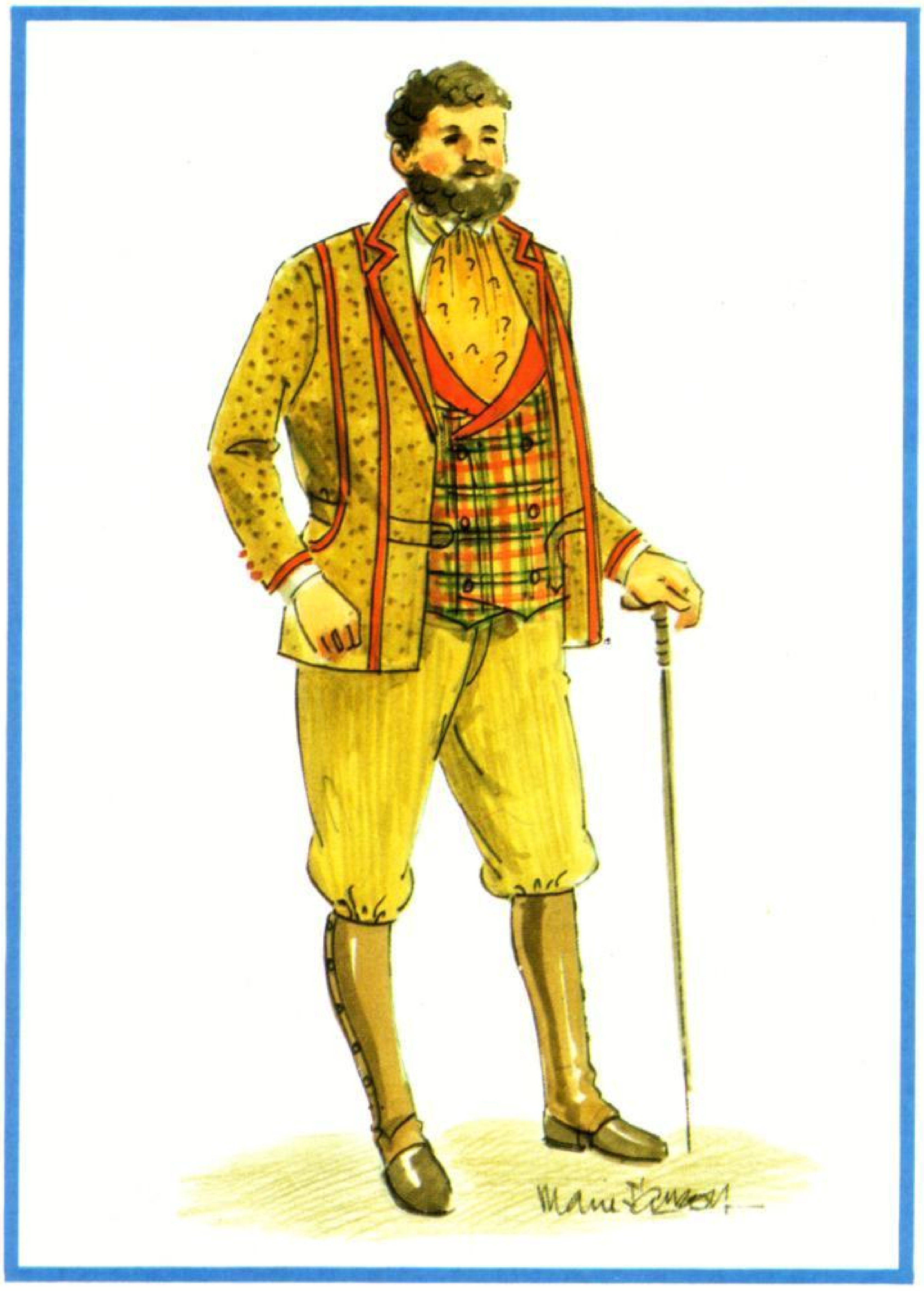
Doctor WHO MAGAZINE

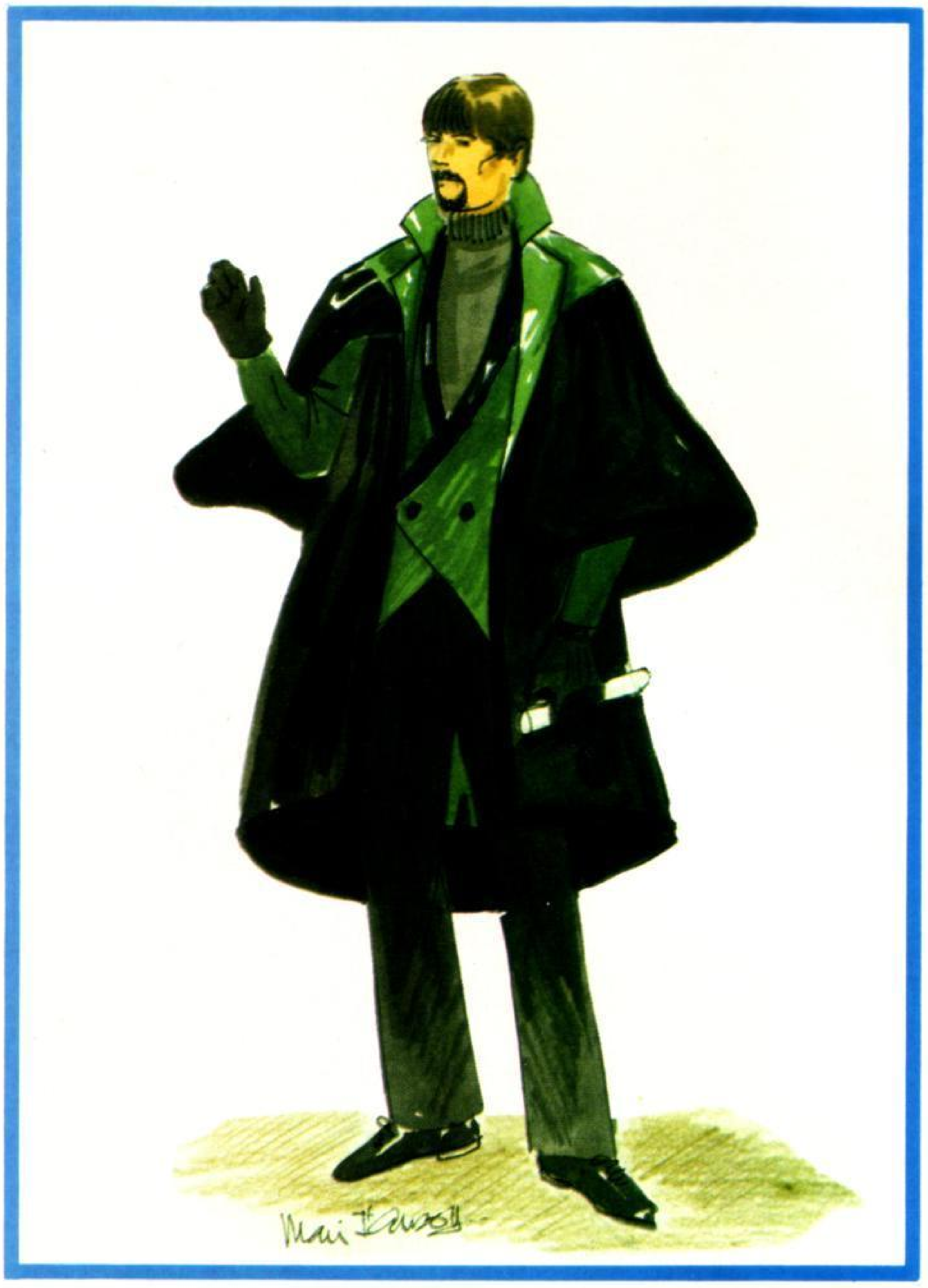
MARVEL [redacted]
No 131 • DEC 1987

Set Visit

INTERVIEWS:
Bonnie Langford
John Nathan-Turner

Meet Ace





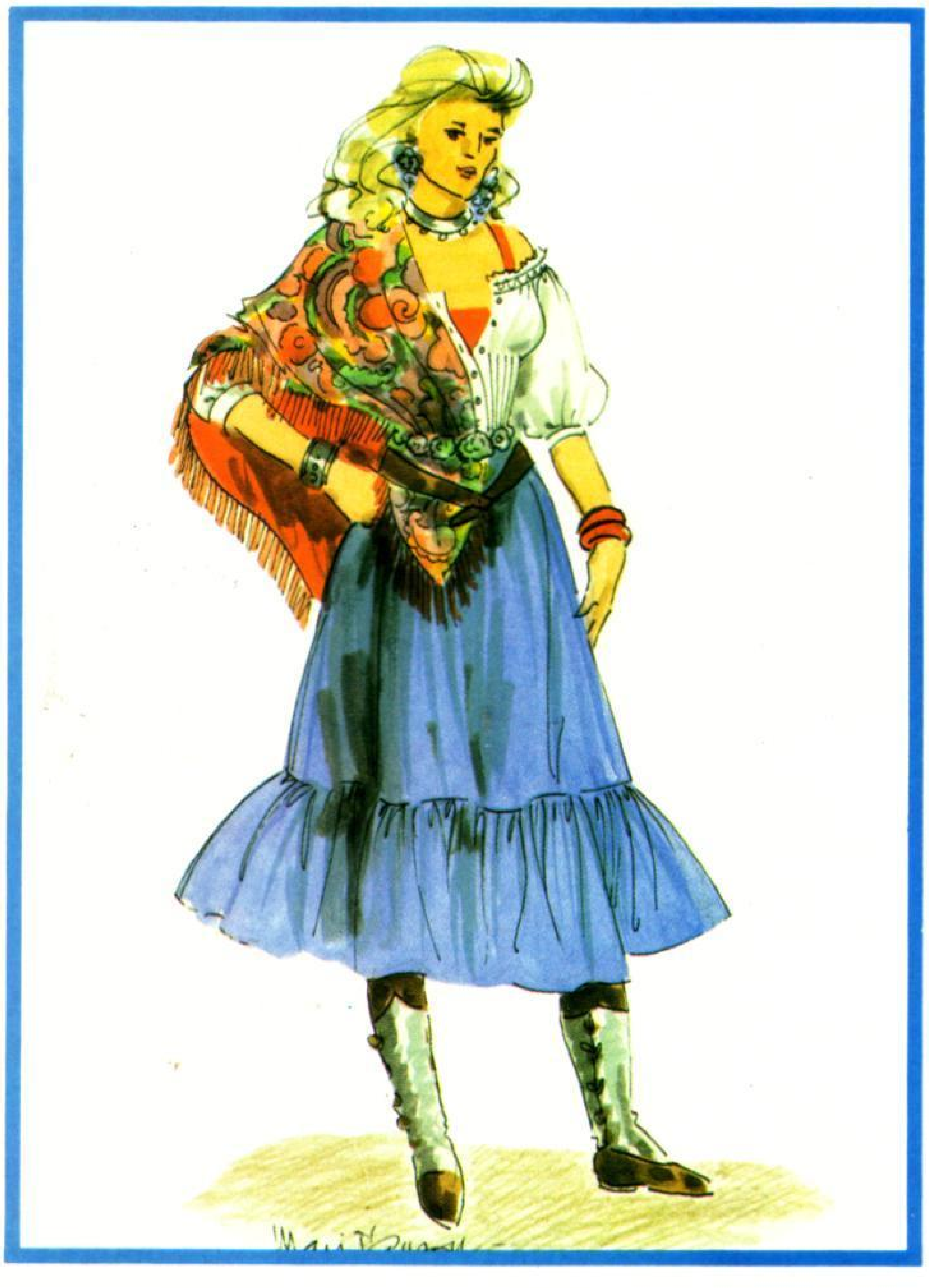
WINNING DESIGNS

Back in *Issue 113,* we ran a *Doctor Who* Designer Competition and at long last, we are happy to present the winner!

It was an extremely tricky competition to judge, due to the usual high standard and diversity of entries. However, taking all things into consideration, as they say, we are bringing you the winning designs, by Wanda Sue Morain and Mike Acord, of Cleveland, Ohio.

As you may remember, you were asked to design costumes for the Doctor as if played by Brian Blessed, his companion (Meryl Streep) and the villain (John Hurt). The location chosen by Wanda and Mike is an American amusement park, where the Doctor meets Maggie (Meryl Streep) who runs a fortune-telling booth in the park. The villain, they reckon, should be the Master, here disguised as the designer of the space ride for the park. Unknown to all, it is actually a transporter to bring to Earth a workforce of aliens, who are constructing a device that will threaten the existence of both Earth and (unknown to themselves) the aliens' own planet.

Our congratulations to Wanda and Mike. Your prize – your designs drawn up by a fashion artist – is on its way to you.



Coming Next Month...

Issue 132 takes a look at the world of ***Doctor Who* merchandise** and what's currently on offer. We also look back at the 1987 **DWAS PanoptiCon VIII** — and even further back, to ***An Unearthly Child*, in Archives.** We interview **director Nick Mallet** and feature **Polly** in **Travelling Companions.**

All this and more in Issue 132, on **sale from 10th December, cover price £1.00.**

Also currently on sale is the **Doctor Who Autumn Special,** Your designer guide to the series! The Special takes a behind-the-scenes look at *Doctor Who*, speaking to **costume designer June Hudson, director Julia Smith** and **new title designer Oliver Elmes.** With a fine sequence of **rare photos from Ray Cusick's personal collection** and 16 pages colour, this is a must at £1.95.

DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE

No.131 December 1987

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You on Who!

Write in to: You On Who, Doctor Who Magazine, 23 Redan Place, London W2 4SA.

BEST YET

After your peculiar and particularly unrevealing preview of *Time and Rani* in **DWM** 128, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. Having seen it, I'm not entirely sure what I got.

Sylvester McCoy was hard to take at first, being a bit silly in parts but by episode two – in his own costume – he had adopted a very definite character for Doctor number Seven which knocks all the others for six.

He was quite brilliant and his sparkling partnership with the greatly improved Bonnie Langford was a joy to behold. It's a great pity that they will only be together for another three stories, since they have now established the best Doctor-companion relationship for years – and all that in one story!

F. Hole,
Crosby,
Merseyside.

LOAD OF RUBBISH

I watched the new *Doctor Who* series on 7th September. What a load of rubbish – the title sequence and theme music have gone from bad to worse and so has Doctor Who and his companion. John Nathan-Turner must have been out of his mind, choosing Sylvester McCoy as the Doctor and Bonnie Langford as Melanie, because 1: Sylvester McCoy acts as a comedian and doesn't take anything seriously; he's a total fool! 2: Bonnie Langford doesn't belong to *Doctor Who;* she should have stuck to dancing – that's what she was best at doing.

J N-T is just making *Doctor Who* out to be a comedy show – he's ruining it. If I had my way, I'd sack J N-T and bring back producers like Barry Letts, Philip Hinchcliffe and Graham Williams.

Simon Thom,
Aberdeen.

EVIL AS EVER

After hearing that Michael Grade is keeping his eyes on the ratings, I was disgusted to find that *Doctor Who* is scheduled against that mammoth ITV ratings grabber, *Coronation Street.*

Anyway, I'm glad to say that Sylvester McCoy has settled in the role very nicely; even my dad liked him! Bonnie Langford has also finally found her roots and is beginning to be believable as Mel. The new theme music and title sequence is excellent, much better than the dated star sequence. The special effects are better than ever and so far haven't taken over the show.

Kate O'Mara is still as evil as ever and The Tetraps are very impressive, especially Richard Gauntlett, who is brilliant as the Igor-like Urak. Mark Greenstreet, Wanda Ventham and Donald Pickering have all been portraying their roles with ease but the latter has been a little under-used.

If the rest of the season is as good as this, then *Doctor Who* will be on our screens for a long time and let's hope that Michael Grade will put the series at a different time slot next time.

David Knight,
Abingdon,
Oxfordshire.

EMBARRASSING

Well *Time and the Rani,* by the most ridiculously embarrassing comedy writers since Ben Elton and Lise Meyer, Pip and Jane Baker, has just finished. What can I say? I think I missed the joke.

Apart from Kate O'Mara's regular cries of 'You imbecile/fool/brainless idiot', and 'Nothing can stop me now!', giant 'bats' with wings which were so completely out of proportion to their bodies as to be negligible, Bonnie 'I'm so nice I could sing' Langford shrieking her unpleasantly large lungs at every conceivable moment, endless quarry scenes, aliens who looked as exciting as bricks, sets which seem to comprise almost entirely other sets (is there some sort of Charitable Institution for Destitute Television Scenery which John Nathan-Turner is a member of the Board of Governors for..?), and a completely incomprehensible ending, it was terrible. I haven't felt so embarrassed since... Oh, since the last season ended.

There are some good writers around – *Star Cops,* except on the odd occasion, was really quite good – so *why* are we continuously subjected to this puerile, clichéd rubbish? The BBC could do much better things with their money, encouraging such serials as *Vanity Fair* or plays like *The Happy Valley.* I do hope someone sees sense and removes this "programme", replacing it with something more intelligent (extended repeats of *Play School* perhaps?).

Michael Bonner,
Banstead,
Surrey.

TRAGIC TIMING

I disagree intensely with S. Penn and company (**DWM** Issue 127).
Obviously *they* do not have the hazards of coming home late after school and proceeding with homework!

What a diabolical time for a popular science fiction series: Monday, 7.35pm! It's just as bad as having it at midnight on Sunday.

How would it hit the younger viewers if their parents told them, "*Doctor Who?* definitely not! You haven't finished your homework and besides, it's a schoolday tomorrow!"

Please, for the sake of the younger viewers, change your timing back to a Saturday, 5.45pm, or Sunday, 6.00pm.

To finish on a happier note, I think Sylvester McCoy is going to be a roaring success!

Nicholas Berg,
London.

INSIDE JOKE

Recently I was viewing part 1 of *Destiny of the Daleks,* when I noticed a very clever inside joke perpetrated by Douglas Adams, the script editor for that particular season.

It comes when the Doctor is lying pinned under a beam, after the Daleks' mining operations on Skaro have caused a minor earthquake. To pass the time while Romana is out retrieving K9 (in order to unpin the Doctor), he pulls a book entitled *The Origin of the Universe* from one of his coat pockets to read.

The author of the book is none other

than Oolon Colluphid, whom fans of Adams' 'Hitchhiker' series will remember as the author of many (fictitious) books, such as *Where God Went Wrong, Some More Of God's Greatest Mistakes,* and *Who is This God Person Anyway?*

Whereas Douglas Adams may not have been the greatest of script editors, I did enjoy his little inside joke and thought the readers would, too.

Tom Wilk,
Chicago,
Illinois.

MINOR FLAW

Many thanks for the **Autumn Special**. It was just what I needed to tide me over between **DWM** issues 128 and 129. The features which touched on the new season (especially the title sequence) were, I thought, particularly interesting.

Actually I bought the Special some 51 hours before *Time and the Rani* began, so it helped pass some impatient hours!

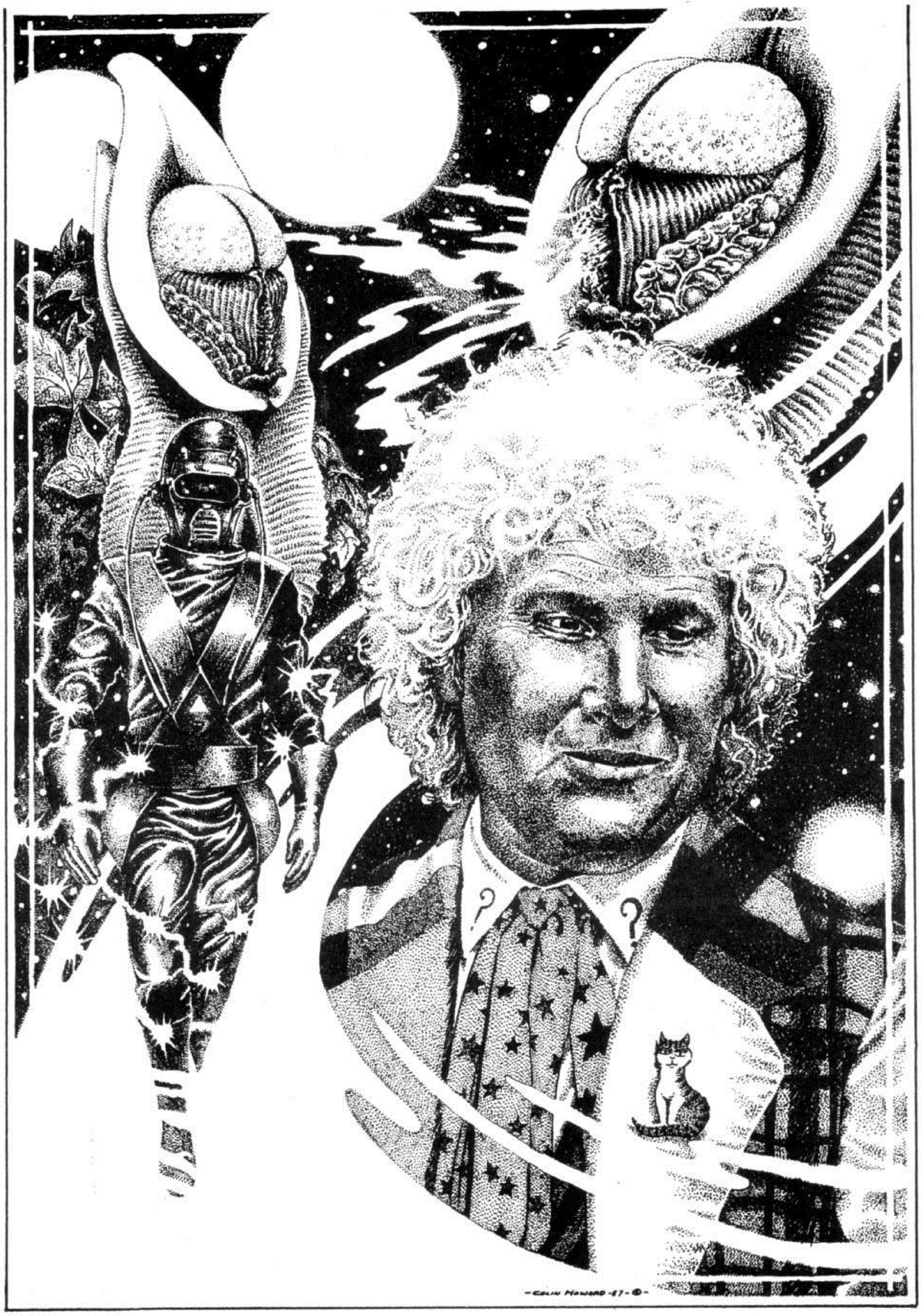
My only gripe, and a fairly trivial one at that, is that the Design Checklist named Story C as *Beyond The Sun,* when it should of course have been *Edge of Destruction/Brink of Disaster.*

Beyond The Sun was, if I am correct ("and I invariably am"), the abandoned Hartnell story set on a planet orbiting the opposite side of the sun to the Earth.

Congrats once again on the Special nevertheless, despite the title boobs.

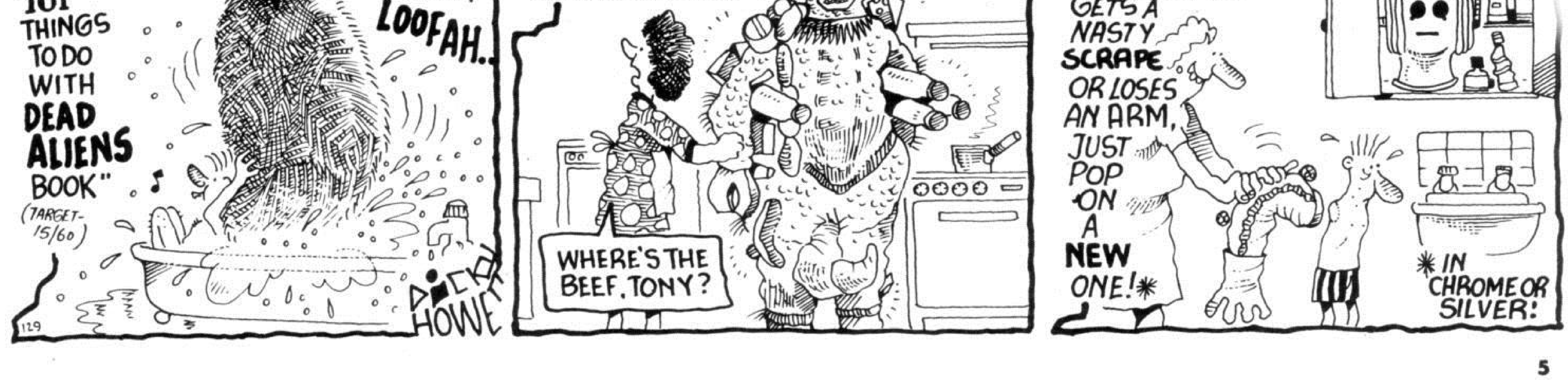
Andy 'Mike' Biswell,
Chessington,
Surrey.

Technically, you are correct, though Edge of Destruction *and* Brink of Disaster *are episode titles, rather than the story title.* Beyond the Sun *was a working title which stuck, although also the title of the scrapped Malcolm Hulke story, as you pointed out.*


COLIN HOWARD -87- ©

◆ **Artwork by Colin Howard, Harleston, Norfolk.**

DOCTOR WHO? by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett


Presenting excerpts from the "101 THINGS TO DO WITH DEAD ALIENS BOOK" (TARGET- 15/60)
No. 1: A DEAD YETI MAKES A DANDY LOOFAH..
DICKY HOWETT
129
No. 2: ICE WARRIORS ARE THE CHEAPEST FORM OF REFRIGERATION...
WHERE'S THE BEEF, TONY?
No 3: A DEAD CYBERMAN IS A BOON TO EVERY MEDICINE CABINET - WHEN LITTLE JOHNNY GETS A NASTY SCRAPE OR LOSES AN ARM, JUST POP ON A NEW ONE!*
* IN CHROME OR SILVER!

SET REPORT

SNOW BIZ!

Thanks to producer John Nathan-Turner, this month's preview is a bit more special. It follows a *Doctor Who Magazine* visit to the studios at Television Centre where the series is made and it all happened back on August 13th.

Walking onto the set accompanied by production secretary Kate Easteal, it's easy to see why the programme can be produced with such a tight schedule. This was the final day of the recording and rehearsals were proceeding apace for the recordings that were to follow that afternoon and evening.

To an outsider, watching the *Doctor Who* crew at work can be a very frustrating process. Just as a scene gets into its stride, it will either stop, so that cameras and microphones can ensure their positions are exactly right (according to the director's detailed camera script), or simply because each scene doesn't tend to be longer than a couple of minutes.

If one were watching a recording on the *Casualty* set, or in the studio for one of the classic serials, it would be a different matter. In these sort of productions where the emphasis is on words, scenes of up to ten minutes can be attempted without a halt. In *Doctor Who,* with all the stops for effects and added camera angles (which increase pace and tension), as well as for the inevitable mistakes, one might be forgiven for thinking that the cast and crew would be slowly driven out of their minds.

That this isn't so is generally down to the Production Manager. It is he or she who acts as the director's assistant on the studio floor and maintains the vital discipline that keeps the show on schedule, without the grind wearing down those who are involved. For *Dragonfire,* as for *Delta and the Bannermen* (the two being recorded as one production) the Production Manager was Gary Downie, who did the same job on *The Two Doctors* and who worked for the show before, during Tom Baker's reign, on *Underworld.* Watching Gary at work was interesting – he has captured the ability to have jokes and keep smiling, while at the same time letting everyone know what was what and that no slackness could be tolerated.

This discipline showed itself when a confused actor walked off the set before he was cleared to go, and when the busy studio got too noisy. It can't have been easy that day either, because there were several visitors to the studio, as well as the array of technicians, who often cause the outsider to wonder what they actually do!

TREASURE HUNT

The story itself is an interesting one, by a writer new to television. It has all the elements for a marvellous mystery and though we obviously don't want to give too much away, here is a taster of what to expect.

For centuries humans, and so it seems, aliens, have been fascinated by the idea of treasure hunts – for perhaps there is an added element of romance and danger about a search for a prize not only elusive but generally fabled. This is the case in *Dragonfire,* for the treasure that everyone seems so intent on finding isn't at all what one might first expect.

The principal focus of attention in the story is Kane, someone who could hardly be said to act on the highest of motives, and who poses quite a threat for the Doctor and Mel to overcome. Deep within the ice caverns and corridors of an alien planet, there lurks more than just the treasure that Kane is so keen to get his hands on – there is also considerable danger, not only from the natural environment, but also from the creature who lives within. The ice itself, while inconvenient for the Doctor and for most humans, also acts as a unique form of defence against intruders in search of the treasure it conceals.

In this adventure the Doctor shows yet again his skill at communicating with those beings most people wouldn't hang around to meet. His greatest communication problems, ironically enough, come from those who are fighting on his side – Mel, Ace and Glitz. As a character, Ace is covered elsewhere in this issue, while the appearance of Glitz on the scene isn't quite the joyful reunion fans might expect.

RETURN OF A FAVOURITE

Originally, Glitz wasn't involved in the scenario for *Dragonfire,* but there was a character very much like him in whimsical appeal, and a similar air of butter-wouldn't-melt-in-his-mouth. After checking with actor Tony Selby, producer John Nathan-Turner decided to change the name and with a slight bit of re-writing, to bring back Glitz instead.

Selby clearly relishes playing the part and he has that wonderful skill of making his acting look so natural that the casual onlooker might be fooled into thinking it was Selby's own personality on view and not the creation of a script writer.

Glitz now has his own form of transport – the good ship *Nosferatu* – but he soon finds that such a convenience can be a mixed blessing. This adventure abounds with humour of the verbal variety, much of it uttered by the forceful Ace, or by the cynical and gently sarcastic Glitz.

Watch out for more of Sylvester McCoy's trademarks – energetic busyness, extravagant movements and wide-eyed bewilderment.

On a final note as far as the plot is

concerned, this is the story that will bid farewell to Bonnie Langford. As Mel, Bonnie has conquered many of the critics who decided to condemn her before she even appeared on screen. It's a shame that she hasn't had longer to develop the part, but with her other career commitments, it was never on the cards that she would be with the series for much longer than a year or so.

While we can assure the worried that Mel doesn't meet a sticky end, we can equally confirm that the production team haven't opted for a cop-out ending. Mel leaves the Doctor's side in a highly credible explanation that leaves room for her perhaps to pop up in the future in a guest capacity . . .

POLYSTYRENE SNOW

Making an ice planet convincing has been one of the principle challenges of this production, especially as it has all been taped in the studio, thus losing the added space that can be gained on location work. Clearly, the story has had to rely on imaginative contributions from its designer, as there was no chance of using the Orson Welles method and filming in a giant refrigerator for the sake of authenticity.

The end effect has been greatly added to by the clever use of some stunning model shots and by the manipulation of the studio lighting. There is also some inventive use of colour separation overlay – achieved in the same way as director Chris Clough's space ship in the *Terror of the Vervoids* adventure.

Wasn't he worried that expanded polystyrene snow and sheets of plastic 'ice' might look less than convincing on screen? "There is always that problem with something of this nature, but there are no real alternatives to what we have used. This was something we gave a lot of thought to in the planning stages but without the money available you are always going to be limited to using the same old measures.

"Partly it was a question of making sure that the actors kept in their heads the continuity of where they were supposed to be and didn't start wandering about as though it was the middle of summer. We rationalised it by saying, 'Well, it's cold, but it's not that cold!'

"There is no practical solution to the problem of cold breath not being apparent. Years ago in Hollywood, when they made the film of *Lost Horizon,* the director experimented with little wire boxes which were fitted inside the actors' mouths and contained dry ice to achieve the effect. But apart from being very complicated to fit properly and without showing, they weren't comfortable, inhibited the actors' speech and often, the dry ice burnt the inside of their mouths! So, short of filming on location, there's nothing we can do."

CAREFUL LIGHTING

There was additional pressure with this story, because the sets were of necessity quite flimsy and looking at them close up, it's a wonder that they look so good on screen. Very often television sets look absolutely dreadful and extremely tacky before they are lit, and this was definitely the case with those assembled for *Dragonfire.* However, on camera they looked fine, as convincing as it was possible to achieve and greatly helped by the acting of the cast.

It was possible to view what was going to be seen on screens in the final stage by looking at one of the monitors carefully arranged around the studio. These are most important to all concerned and everyone, from make-up and costume through to lighting men and the Production Manager, were glued to what they showed during each run-through of a take. Woe betide anybody who got in the way!

The only real difference at this stage was that most of the actors weren't in full costume, if at all – and this must have been a great relief to the actor playing the chief alien of the story, as it's remarkable how hot it can get, even with the studio being fully air-conditioned.

IMPRESSIVE GUEST LIST

The guest cast is impressive as ever. Patricia Quinn plays Belazs, and she gives her usual strong performance, one which is the result of an impressive career spanning such credits as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Shoulder To Shoulder* and *The Box of Delights.* Also present is Tony Osoba, who appeared before in *Destiny of the Daleks.* This time he plays Kracauer. Finally, Edward Peel from *Juliet Bravo* is in the vital role of Kane, and he was cast by the director because of a "certain toughness about the eyes that I liked and a generally hard quality that was very important for the character".

Designer for the story is John Asbridge, while in charge of make up is Gillian Thomas. Finally costumes are under the supervision of Richard Croft and the Visual Effects Designer is Andy McVean.

Before we left the studio, it was possible to catch a few quick words with the producer. What did it feel like, now he had reached the conclusion of this highly important season, his seventh as overall boss of the show? He told us: "I'm delighted with the series this year, really very pleased. And I think Sylvester's going to be a wow. I think it all looks very good, and I'm really surprised at how quickly it seems to have gone." Not so surprising to learn that John was looking forward to his holiday at the end of recording!

Dragonfire has plenty of ingredients to consolidate the success of this new era of *Doctor Who.* It obviously hasn't got the biggest budget in the world, but it isn't as waywardly silly as some of the lower budgeted stories of the past. In certain respects it achieves a high standard of interest and its conclusion will both finish a highly important season and set the scene for the 25th series to come.

Richard Marson

J-N-T TIME

Producer John Nathan-Turner found time during work on the 24th Season to talk to Gary Russell about the innovations introduced this year . . .

Unless you've been hiding on Mars for the last eight years, you can't help but have noticed that the Producer of *Doctor Who* is one John Nathan-Turner. He started off his *Doctor Who* career as a Floor Assistant during the late Troughton/early Pertwee years, and during the Graham Williams-produced era of the Tom Baker series, he was Production Unit Manager.

In November 1979, he became Producer and during his time has seen the departure of Tom Baker, the arrival and departure of Peter Davison and Colin Baker and now the arrival of Sylvester McCoy (who, it seems, likes to be called Sylv. and *not* Sly).

Sylvester isn't the only new member of the *Doctor Who* team; script editor Andrew Cartmel also made his debut this season. Where had John found him?

"Well, he was suggested to me by his agent. He is a writer, relatively young – in his twenties – and I read an awful lot of his stuff which I thought was smashing. We then met, to find out whether he'd be interested in finding out more about television as a script editor and he leapt at it.

"If you're going to have a new script editor, you want to capitalise on him and what was most exciting about Andrew was that we sat and chatted about *Doctor Who* and a 'sparky' conversation happened – there were things we agreed on, things we disagreed on and things that sent us off on tangents, and really that's the best kind of environment for a producer to work in. If he has a Script Editor who totally agrees with everything he says, or totally disagrees with everything he says, it becomes a stifling of everyone's talent.

"Andrew and I very definitely sparked and so we went through some ideas for the new season. Some of the writers, but not all of them, were known to Andrew. Stephen Wyatt for example, came to me first before Andrew joined and we talked and started thinking about a story. Then I put him and Andrew together and a smashing story developed."

What about the first story of the new season, *Time And The Rani,* by the only *Who* - experienced writers this year, Pip and Jane Baker?

"I think there are probably some of the best special effects in it that I have ever seen on television. It's a very interesting first story, it's not highly complex but really what you're trying to do is to profile the new Doctor and make him 'showy' and to the fore. Similarly, with someone like Kate O'Mara, you want there to be a good section with her. I think it's a cracking good story for the new Doctor to embark upon.

"I approached Kate first. She loves the series, and she agreed to do it, even before seeing a script. She gave me an early go-ahead and that meant I could commission the story."

FULL CHARACTERISATION

Secondly there is Stephen Wyatt's *Paradise Towers,* a strange-sounding title with a guest cast that would make a BBC *Play of the Month* production green with envy.

"Yes, well we were thinking of putting up a caption at the end saying that the extra playing the third guard on the right was *not* a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company! But seriously, I think what Stephen has created, quite brilliantly, is a different way of speaking and a completely new way of life for a new civilisation. It's been thought through all the way along how people eat, how people live and most specifically how they talk. There's a very interesting way, for instance, that the 'Kangs' speak.

"It is that fullness of characterisation that has attracted the likes of Brenda Bruce (*Tilda*), Liz Spriggs (*Tabby*), Judy Cornwall (*Maddy*) Richard Briers (*Caretaker*) and Clive Merrison (*Deputy Caretaker*). We also saw Mark (*Turlough*) Strickson's wife, Julie Brennon, for a part as one of the Kangs. We saw more than thirty girls and because most of the part is one-liners, rather than scenes, it was very difficult to do a reading at the auditions, so we did improvisations with various girls and Julie was super."

Next story in the series is *Delta and the Bannermen,* written by another newcomer to *Doctor Who,* Malcolm Kholl.

"Malcolm is somebody that Andrew knew. The story is a sort of pastiche; music plays an important part in the script. Malcolm has specified which numbers are the background to which scenes, so that virtually all, but not all, the music has been selected by the writer. Really I would hate anyone to call this *Doctor Who – The Musical* but it's the closest the show will ever get, because music was such a focal point in the 1950s.

"There's a lot of background rock 'n' roll and a lot of lip-synch singing in it as well. David Kinder, who plays Billy, is quite a find and is seen singing in a pop group and he also sings on the tracks for all three episodes, singing the incidental music, backed by The Wilson Sisters, who also appear in a scene as the Doo-Wop Girls in a pop group. That music is important to the story, but it's never gratuitous. It's cleverly thought through and relates to the action going on in a scene.

"I imagine it's the period that has attracted our guest cast – and also once again it's full of very good parts. They're not all massive – Ken Dodd's (*Toll Master*) is only in one episode, Hugh Lloyd (*Garonwy*) who plays a mad Welsh bee-keeper is only in two but we've also got people like Don Henderson (*Gavrok*),Richard Davies as the owner of the holiday camp and Belinda Mayne (*Delta*). There's a couple of brief TARDIS scenes and the rest of the story is entirely videoed on location."

TRADITIONAL STORY

Finally there is *Dragon Fire,* written by the last newcomer, Ian Briggs.

"Ian is another colleague of Andrew's. I think it's a relatively *traditional* story, in the sense that it is studio-bound and *Doctor Who* started out as a studio-bound programme. It's a very nice cast again. Tony Selby returns as Glitz, and we've got Shirin Taylor (*Customer*), Tony Osoba (*Kracauer*), Patricia Quinn (*Belazs*) and Edward Peel (*Kane*) the baddie! It's all set on an ice planet.

"Altogether, I think the whole season is varied and well balanced. There's no similarity between stories or the styles of writing. I'm rather excited, but still tentative. We've certainly heightened the humour – but it is not silly or *Hitch-Hiker's Guide To the Galaxy*-ish. I think there's a lot of humour of character, which is the best kind, because it comes from the essence of the part. There's also the wit of dialogue and there's Sylvester McCoy. He's very witty and amusing. Very inventive, tremendously physical and wants to do his own stunts – and he's very good at them."

Talking about Sylvester McCoy, how had John Nathan-Turner cast him? "Well, he was suggested by his agent. I went along in January to see him in *The Pied Piper of Hamlyn.* As a result I met him and chatted to him. And there we were. So the thought that agent's letters are never really read, a waste of time and are just thrown into a bin really goes out of the window.

"I'm delighted with him, and I think his relationship with Melanie is particularly good. They work very well together."

UNUSUAL CHOICE

Why was Bonnie Langford cast as a companion, as *Doctor Who* was not the sort of show one would normally associate her with?

"Well, I devised Melanie as a character in July of 1985, but as it wasn't too important at that point, I never started to think about the casting. Then in December, I happened to be up in the West End, when I phoned Barry Burnett, Colin Baker's agent, to see if he wanted to meet for a chat.

"I thought, as one does when meeting agents, who else was on his books, so you can make polite conversation. My mind went through a few names I remembered and I suddenly thought of Bonnie Langford and realised that *she* fitted my concept of Melanie as this health fanatic perfectly.

"I asked about Bonnie, but said that I doubted it was the sort of thing she'd want to do. But Barry thought it was just the sort of different thing she had been looking for and so it went from there.

"The background I had already created for Melanie in my book, *Doctor Who – The Companions,* with the computer fraud involving the Master, was really a brief to writers who might want a background reference for her – I never intended to take it as established *Who*-lore. Indeed, we went right against it during the trial, because she didn't know who the Master was." ▶

"I think that whole Saturday viewing thing has changed dramatically in recent years..."

◀ Another element in this whole new-look season has been the possibly overdue revamp of the title sequence, with new music, though still based on Ron Grainer's famous piece. The new graphics are very state-of-the-art computer graphics. Why had the change been made, and why so radically?

"Well, obviously we had to change the face in the sequence and Oliver Elmes, our graphic designer, came to see me and we had a general chat, and discussed the sort of thing I was looking for. I thought the starfield-into-face was overused, really, and so Oliver suggested going to an outside company called CAL Video, to do a computer generated sequence. And so it evolved from that. *Doctor Who* has always been in the forefront of new television technology and although we're by no means the first to use computer graphics, I felt Oliver's ideas were a very fresh look at the art.

"As for the music; well, unlike many other people, I liked Dominic Glynn's *Trial* music enormously, but I felt that as we were moving into a whole new era, new Doctor, new graphics, new music seemed logical. Having decided to change it, I *now* think Keff McCulloch's version really *is* the best ever."

NEW TIME SLOT

Another new thing about Season 24 is the time slot. As with the Peter Davison stories, *Doctor Who* is back on a weekday slot, though just once a week. What were John's views on this?

"I think it's a wonderful move. It's the latest the programme's ever been shown, it's in prime time and okay, it's got strong competition in *Coronation Street,* but it is sandwiched between two hugely popular shows, *Wogan* and a run of *Hi-De-Hi.*

"I actually think the whole Saturday viewing thing has changed so dramatically in recent years, mostly due to the video. People go out nowadays on Saturday, rather than stay in and can set the video to record what they want. And of course video recordings don't register in the ratings.

"That Saturday tea-time tradition is long gone, especially in the Autumn when the evenings are still warm and light. I mean, I have to set the buzzer on my cooker if I'm down the garden to remind me it's on. I wonder how many people forgot to set their buzzers last Autumn?

"And of course, our ratings were over nine million during the Peter Davison/weekday slots, so I'm optimistic for this season and I'm very excited. I think this placing, well into the 'adult' scheduling, shows a marvellous vote of confidence in the show from the Sixth Floor at Television Centre.

"Anyway, *Coronation Street*'s no problem, now Hilda Ogden's going, they'll be switching to us in their millions. Maybe I'll get Hilda in as the next companion!"

Finally, November this year sees John Nathan-Turner having occupied the *Doctor Who* hot seat longer than any previous producer. Had he imagined he'd still be there now, back in 1979?

"Absolutely not! I mean, I didn't envisage myself sitting here now, in 1985! I must say I've found this season exhilarating to work on. I've particularly enjoyed working with Andrew Cartmel, who is such an excellent and interesting Script Editor. It's been a good fun season."

On that optimistic note, I thanked John for his time and decided for the first time in a few years that I actually felt a thrill of excitement and anticipation for the new series of *Doctor Who.* John's last word on the subject:

"I say this every year and I'll say it again. I see no reason to suppose this is the last series of *Doctor Who.* This series is good, and I think it will be very, very successful."

▼ ***The Rani as Mel falls foul of Urak in* Time and the Rani.**

OFF THE SHELF

A regular look at the world of Doctor Who in print. . .

It's quite a mixed bag of goodies for this, our last regular *off The Shelf.* The column is going bi-monthly (that means every other issue in plainer English) and in future each column will be twice as long as this. You'll see what I mean in a couple of months, when I take a detailed look at Pip & Jane Baker's *Time & The Rani* novel, Terrance Dicks' *Wheel In Space* and, if it's ready, Titan Books' long-awaited series of Script Books, starting with *An Unearthly Child* by Anthony Coburn.

In the meantime, let's start off this month's selection with a look at an important new work of non-fiction on the *Doctor Who* front. David Saunders' first volume of his massive *The Encyclopedia of the Worlds of Doctor Who* is quite an achievement and to ninety-nine per cent of *Doctor Who* fans, it really will be the ultimate reference work concerning the first six Doctors.

David has done a real A to Z of the show, listing every character, place, planet, event etc. in the history of the programme. It sticks entirely to *Doctor Who* on TV; i.e. it contains no behind-the-scenes references, and no mentions of non-televised productions like *Shada or Slipback* (although they'll be detailed in an appendix in the final volume). The first volume contains A to D (including Adric, Axons, Cybermen, Daleks, Betelgeuse, Alexander the Great etc).

Of course, there are probably omissions, some due to exhaustion, others due to computers crashing and wiping whole sections and probably some things some people think ought to be there won't be. Setting limits in such an exercise is not an easy thing to do, but the line had to be drawn somewhere. And as an alternative to Jean Marc L'Officier's *Programme Guides* or Lesley Standrings *Illustrated A-Z,* David's first volume is excellent and although I may be considered a little biased towards it, I think it is the single best and most important non-fiction *Who* book ever to be published. It ought to be a big seller at just under £6 per volume, aided of course by the quite brilliant illustrations by WH Allen book cover artist Tony (*The Rescue*) Clark. Altogether *The Encyclopedia of the Worlds of Doctor Who,* due to be published on the familiar date of November 23rd, 1987 is a book I wholeheartedly applaud and recommend – I don't honestly think you'll be disappointed.

TARGET NEWS

On to WH Allen. As many of you know, last April editor Nigel Robinson left the company to try his luck as a freelance editor/writer and as a result hasn't stopped working. His output includes two more *Who* novels, *The Underwater Menace* and *Edge of Destruction,* both of which we'll be looking at soon. After a period of instability, Jo Thurn is now at the helm.

One victim of the shake-ups seems to have been something that Nigel was very keen on, the *Companions of Doctor Who* novels, which started with Turlough and Harry Sullivan and seem to have ended with the publication (at last) of *K9 & Company,* the pilot show from 1982, which was to have started off a series about the tin dog and his new mistress Sarah Jane Smith.

As of now, the future of this series of novels is uncertain. Victor *(Fury From The Deep)* Pemberton announced at PanoptiCon recently he was to have done a Victoria Waterfield book, and Janet Fielding is known to have been interested in doing a Tegan book, but for now we will just have to live with the K9 book. This is no bad thing, however, as Terence Dudley has turned a fairly childish if not unpleasant script into a highly entertaining and very creepy book all about witchcraft, mistrust and market gardening, complete with sacrifices, dramatic car chases and mythical English demons.

I'm a big fan of Mr Dudley's two *Who* novels (*Black Orchid* and *The King's Demons*) but *K9 and Company* exceeds both of those in terms of sheer breathtaking entertainment and charming writing, with very well defined characters, motivations and above all, a quite chilling atmosphere. If you had to criticise anything it would be that the title character is quite redundant to the plot and it really is a Sarah Jane Smith story.

The story, as I'm sure you all know, concerns that of Sarah's aunt's ward, Brendan, who gets kidnapped around Christmas time by the local coven of black witches in a small Wiltshire village, due to Aunt Livinia's less than complimentary comments about witchcraft in rural England. The chase is then on for Sarah and K9 to track down Brendan, unmask the villains and save the world from the evil goddess Hecate. Sterling stuff that works a lot better on the printed page than it did on the box and well worth the £1.95 cover price. However, the cover is, quite frankly, incredibly dreadful. Peter Kelly's actual illustration of K9 is fine, but the choice of backing colours and pathetic title logo ruin an otherwise attractive piece of art.

GAME BOOKS

Finally this month, a word to our American readers and anyone else interested in adventure game books. You may remember that Severn House over here brought out a series of six adventure game books based on *Doctor Who,* that ranged from bad (Michael Holt's ones) to not-quite-as-bad (Pip & Jane's Rani one). Well, apart from those now being available in America, and in the most splendid covers compared to their UK counterparts, FASA, the company who made the (in my view) unplayable role playing game, have released in the States two adventure games to tie in with the game.

The first features the Fourth Doctor with Sarah and Harry, against *The Vortex Crystal* and the second has the Sixth Doctor, Peri and Harry (?!?) playing *The Rebel's Gamble.* Both novelettes are by William H Keith Jr and within their rather attractive covers are two stories/games infinitely more playable, more adult and more *Who*-ish than any of their British equivalents.

These books are difficult to obtain, but if your town or city has a Virgin Games and Games Workshop in it, they just might stock it as an import. They're pricey (about £4.50 each) but well worth it.

The thing I like about these most is that you don't need to carry dice to play 'em on trains etc, because each page has a random number at the top and you just flick through and stop and whatever that number is is your 'dice throw'.

The books come with complete instructions on how to play, brief introductions about *Doctor Who* and a very nice piece about which particular Doctor is featured (the Colin Baker description is wonderful). Anyway if the chance arises, try to pick them up. If not, write to your penfriend in the States and get 'em to track them down. They're well worth adding to any book collection.

Next *Off The Shelf,* we'll also be presenting the results of our Target Book 1986 survey and announcing the winners of the signed *Time Meddler* book draw.

Finally, this month's paperback release is: *The Massacre* by John Lucarotti at £1.95. Brief verdict: Excellent.

Gary Russell

Season 4

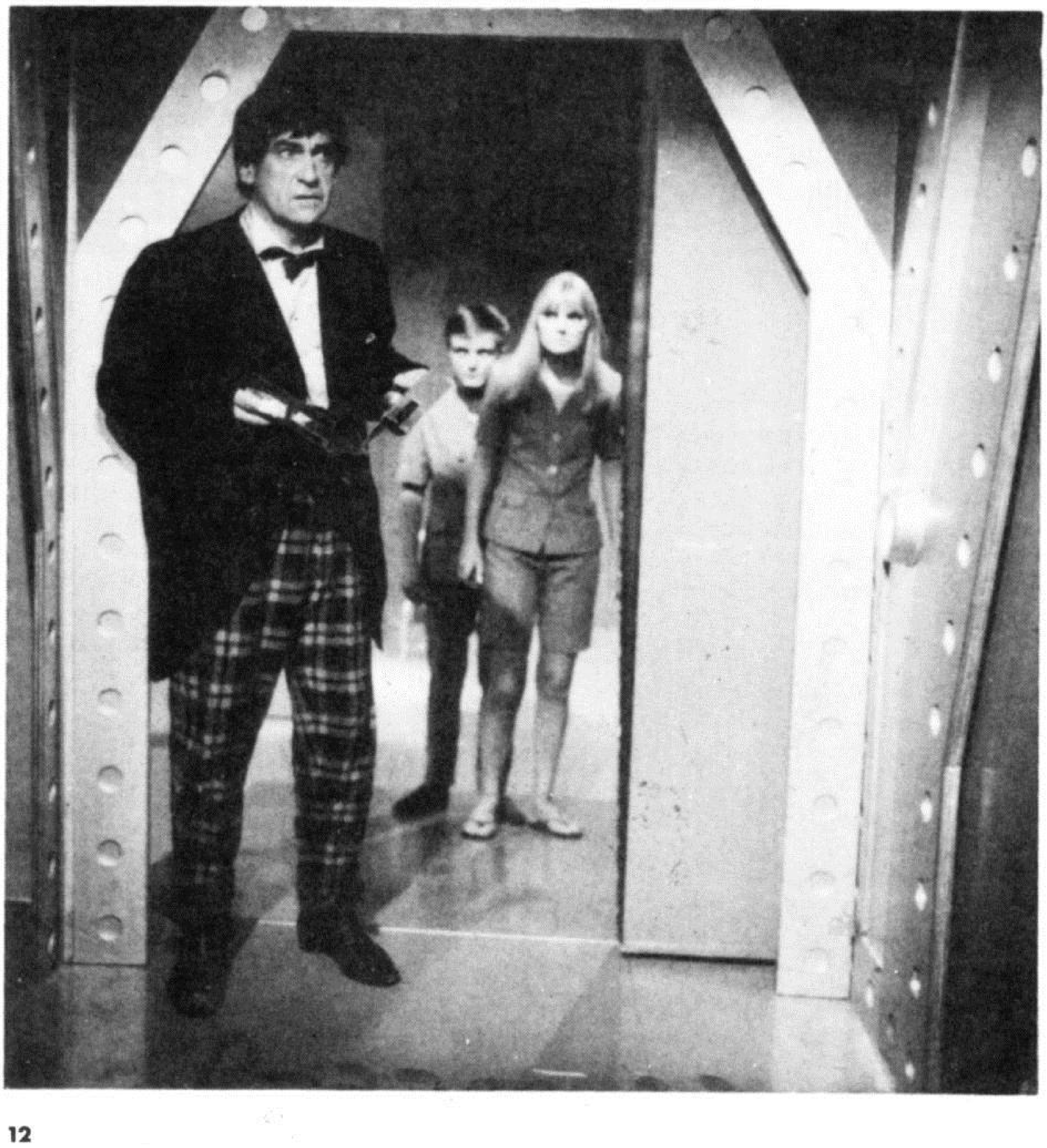
If the Third Season of *Doctor Who* had come close to ruining the popularity and credibility of the series, the Fourth was to re-establish both those vital factors, laying the foundations for a further successful three years. The key to this rebirth was both behind and in front of the cameras, as Richard Marson reports . . .

As mentioned in the Season Three Flashback, that season had concluded with a new producer and script editor, Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis, and two new companions in the shape of Ben and Polly. Lloyd is a master of the television medium, as anyone who has followed his work in recent years will testify (for instance, Alan Bennett's *An Englishman Abroad,* which won a host of awards for the BBC). Lloyd could see that if *Doctor Who* was to survive, then it needed extensive and detailed surgery.

Backing him up in his beliefs was Gerry Davis, who from a story point of view was anxious to see the programme return to its basic strength – strong science fiction-based ideas with as much action and as many monsters as possible.

The third season had concluded with the recording of *The Smugglers* and having decided to go ahead with a fourth, the BBC realised that they would have to look for a new leading actor. Hartnell was getting too ill to cope with the long year that made up the *Doctor Who* season schedule.

After mutual agreement, it was arranged that Hartnell would return to the *Doctor Who* studios one last time to film his final appearance and that then a newcomer would be appointed. This was, in itself, a pretty revolutionary concept for any series. Previously it was only the Americans who would continue series with new title stars – and then with scripted explanations, such as having a cousin appear in place of the original star (viz *Maverick,* in the early sixties). Luckily, the very concept of *Doctor Who* meant that it wasn't too difficult to build in the regeneration clause, which meant also that, should its popularity continue, the long-term future of the series could be assured.



Power of the Daleks

This long-term future would naturally depend to a large extent on how the public accepted the changeover and while Gerry Davis concerned himself with the lining up of scripts he hoped would be exciting and original, Lloyd began to look for his new star.

Patrick Troughton was a generally pleasing choice; the hierarchy at the BBC, still overseen by series co-creator Sydney Newman, realised that Troughton was an excellent character actor, with years of experience behind him and the necessary stamina to sustain the part. They also realised from talks with Troughton that the actor had a genuine enthusiasm for the show and a fertile imagination when it came to looking for ways of playing the part.

In fact, it had taken Lloyd some time to persuade Troughton into thinking seriously about playing the Doctor, but when the decision had finally been made, he threw himself into the challenge wholeheartedly.

As soon as the idea of playing the second Doctor as a kind of 'cosmic hobo' had been agreed upon, Gerry Davis brought in previous *Doctor Who* editor Dennis Spooner to revise the new Doctor's opening script. This was a David Whitaker Dalek story and it was a wise choice to feature the metallic monsters as the new Doctor's first adversary. First, it got viewers watching and secondly, they strengthened the link between past and present.

With Ben and Polly already familiar to followers of the show, the first instalments could be angled largely from their point of view, allowing for more suspense as viewers were kept guessing as to how – if at all – benevolent this newcomer would be. Consequently, with *The Tenth Planet* introducing us to Davis' and scientist Kit Pedler's famed creations the Cybermen, and with *The Power of the Daleks* bringing in both new Doctor and the return of the Daleks, the first ten weeks of Season Four were sewn up. Together, the stories were typical of the logically developed and highly professional approach of producer and script editor and as is now obvious, they worked to tremendous effect.

Viewer Alan Berkow remembers: "In those days, there wasn't anything like the advance publicity you get about the series now. You tuned in and if something dramatic happened you were all the more affected, because you hadn't been forewarned. The press obviously announced the change of Doctors but nobody knew how it was going to happen and coupled with the Cybermen and then the Daleks, it was really very exciting.

"It's hard to remember what I thought about the new Doctor, because since then, everyone has become so accustomed to the changes, but I think it took a while before you could really accept that this wildman – this clown – was the same guy as the one we'd watched for three years before."

Far from failing or ebbing away into oblivion, the new series of *Doctor Who* was doing very well indeed. It was clear from the start that the Cybermen were going to be a big success with followers of the show – this was the intention, because by then Terry Nation was talking about removing his copyright on the Daleks and the BBC wanted a successor for the pepperpots – and almost immediately a sequel was commissioned.

Power of the Daleks

This had also to do with budget. Lloyd was concerned to spread the costs of the show over the season, allowing for overspending in certain areas by better use of resources in other episodes. Re-using the Cybermen was as much a costing decision as a creative one – though when it came to it, the Cybermen's appearance was completely revised for their second story, thus messing up the original plan.

After *The Power of the Daleks*, Gerry Davis scripted *The Highlanders*, which it had been decided would be the last of the less popular historicals. This was credited as a collaboration between Davis and veteran writer Elwyn Jones, but in fact Jones did little more than sketch out a setting and a few basic ideas.

Though not as naturally dramatic as the first two stories of the season, *The Highlanders* was greatly helped by the strength of the characters and the skill of the direction from Hugh David.

Innes Lloyd: "Hugh was a great chum and had a terrific talent. He was especially good at making things look expensive when they were in fact relatively cheap."

During *The Highlanders* it was a very close-knit thing, because Hugh was working closely with Gerry and together they worked out the best way of using what was on offer – a writer/director relationship that was common at the start of television but was by that time getting sadly much rarer. Hugh was also strong on casting and brought us people like Hannah Gordon before she was a 'name' and, of course, Frazer Hines as Jamie."

It was quickly agreed that Frazer Hines would be ideal as a new companion and that his character had plenty of potential for both drama and comedy – the Highlander from the past encountering beings and places from the distant future. Hines had worked with Troughton as a child actor, too, and their instantly friendly and close relationship was another plus, considering the time that the actors playing Doctor and companions were forced to be together.

His arrival coincided with the increasing dissatisfaction Lloyd was feeling with the actors playing Ben and Polly. Michael Craze wasn't so much a problem but his character existed very much in tandem with that of Polly and it was Anneke ▶

Peter Jeffrey and Gertan Klauber in a scene from The Macra Terror.

◀ Wills who had become increasingly starry-eyed. This was something that Lloyd, a tough disciplinarian, would not abide – for if it spread to other parts of the cast, it could seriously have affected the smooth running of the show.

Hines was brought in at first as a kind of safety valve – a warning, but both Craze and Wills were naturally annoyed at the newcomer. It was nothing personal (though they were never great friends), but more because Jamie had been written in so hastily that most of his lines had to be pruned from the already quite sparse allocation of the other two.

The old adage that two's company but three's a crowd seemed tailor-made for this situation and matters came to a head during the recording of the fourth adventure proper of Season Four – *The Underwater Menace.* This was being directed by Julia Smith and she, like Lloyd, was a tough disciplinarian, and believed firmly in having things her way.

There was a head-on clash with the cast, who were led in rebellion, says Gerry Davis, "by Anneke, who acted as the focal point of the disagreement". Lloyd acted ruthlessly – regardless of the rights or wrongs of the situation. Ben and Polly were to be dropped as soon as their contracts expired and he instructed Davis that the characters were to go with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of speed. The result was their subdued appearance in *The Faceless Ones* and their absence from most of the action.

The sad thing is that both characters worked well, and that Michael Craze became redundant without his partner and with the arrival of Jamie, the male competition, who was more attractive to write for.

Perhaps the saddest thing is the disappearance of Anneke Wills, who has not lived in this country for many years and thus hasn't been available for a 'setting the record straight' interview. The last heard of her was a couple of years ago at a convention, when Patrick Troughton told onlookers that he last heard she had gone into religious seclusion in India.

Whatever the behind the scenes clashes, *The Underwater Menace* was the worst production of the season. One director (Hugh David) had already turned it down, because he thought it unfilmable on the allocated budget and unfortunately his initial suspicions seem to be borne out by the evidence that remains – a sole telerecording of episode three.

Ham acting from the central villain, cheap costumes and a messy, contrived plot don't serve as a great advertisement for this adventure – and neither does the 'B' movie title.

Fortunately, its successor was a great improvement all round and restored the damage the last script had done (in fact, to do justice to the writer of *The Underwater Menace,* Geoffrey Orme, it deserves mentioning that the script had been knocked up in a hurry, after an earlier idea was abandoned at a late stage).

The Moonbase was a creepy triumph and consolidated the reputation of the Cybermen as the natural successors to the Daleks. Again it was directed by a veteran, Morris Barry, and his interpretation of the script was intelligent and sinister. During an interview with **DWM** several years back, Barry advocated the advantages of the black and white picture for this sort of adventure. It not only covered up the low budget, but also lent the whole proceedings a shadowy sense of implied menace and a hint of countless terrors to come.

It certainly seemed to have worked, as Chris Cayley remembers: "It was set in the most cut-off, claustrophobic place imaginable. In those days everyone was talking about going to the moon – whether we could eventually settle humans out there.

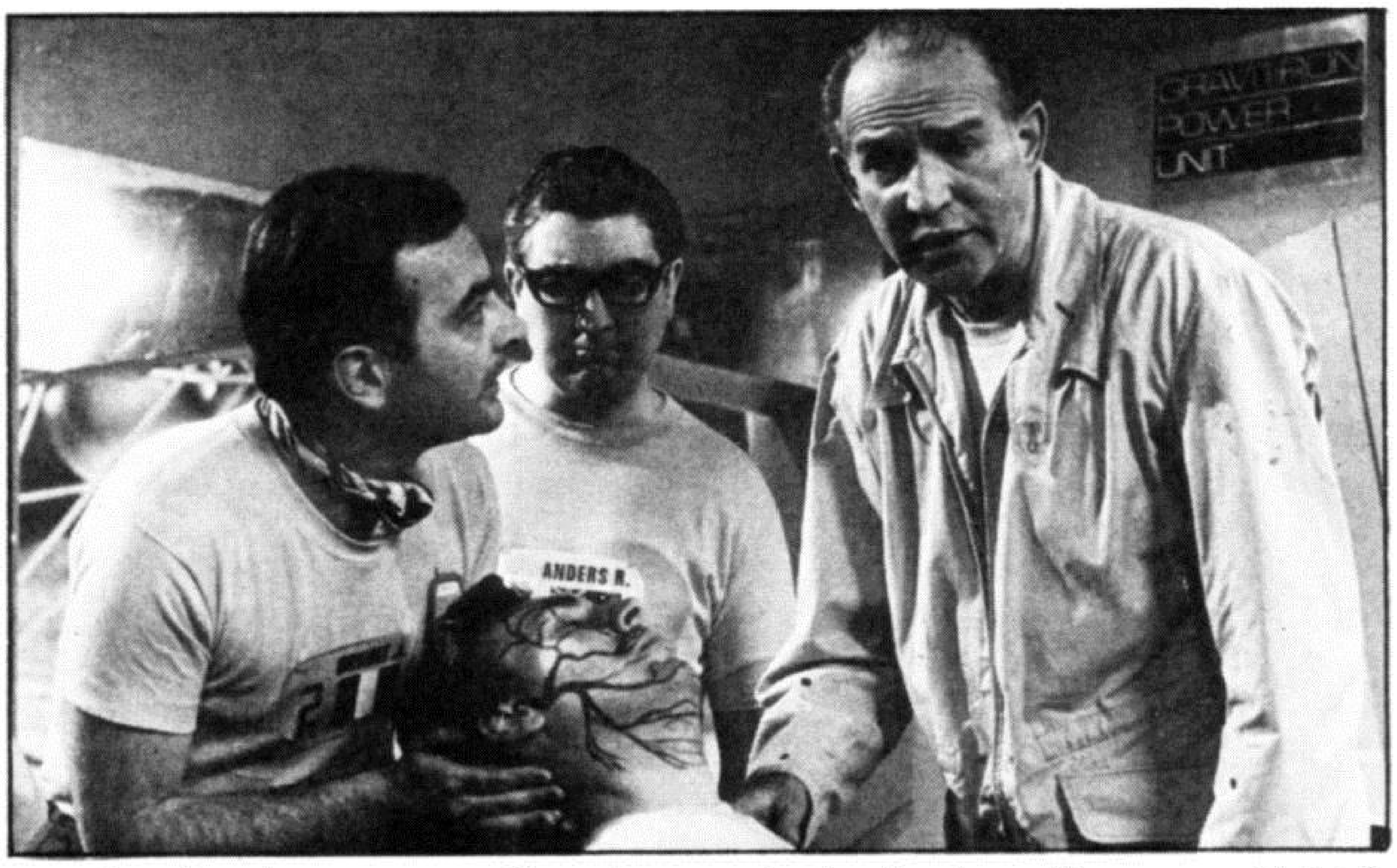
"This was a frightening look at what seemed pretty credible then, and a refinement of that fear were the Cybermats, who were worse in a way than the Cybermen, because they were so insidious. They crept up on you and left their mark – the shadowy lines around their bite – so that you had no doubt something really nasty was happening."

The set design on *The Moonbase* contributed greatly to the end result, as the late Patrick Troughton recalled: "It was my habit to have a little wander about the set before the recording, trying things out and getting used to it all.

"It used to amaze me the things they achieved on *Doctor Who* in those tiny studios before we went to Television Centre, and during *The Moonbase* I went onto the set for my customary walk of inspection and I was very impressed by the Gravitron – which was a huge great thing suspended from the studio ceiling. Seconds after I'd been underneath, admiring it, the whole blessed thing fell down, which gave me quite a scare, I can tell you."

It is not recorded how the hard pressed production team reacted to that little disaster – or how the rest of the cast responded to the idea of working underneath the Gravitron, once restored.

The design of such huge sets was a deliberate choice again of Lloyd and Davis, who argued that it was better to have one really excellent



The Moonbase

set and a few lesser ones, than to have eight or nine shoddy ones. Davis also liked the fact that this closed stories in more and gave room for an added suspense that came from the feeling of there being nowhere to run to.

All that survives of *The Macra Terror* are a few soundless clips recorded off the television screen by a film camera. Unfortunately, they give little indication of how good this story was. It started as an idea of Gerry Davis' – a basic suggestion that the *Doctor Who* team should turn the holiday camp idea on its head and do something sinister with it.

The monster – the Macra – was based on a crab after Davis and the writer he assigned the job, Ian Stuart Black, went through the animal derivations the series had used and those which were left for inspiration (continuity was looked after by Davis' huge wallchart of all the adventures so far filmed and available as a constant cross reference for current and future projects).

When built, this creation was not only huge, but very unwieldy, but the production team cleverly filmed it in darkness and with a lot of dry ice, which had the desired atmospheric effect.

The Macra Terror was characterised by the use of good actors; Peter Jeffrey as the principal focus for suspicion, was smoothly convincing and extremely authoritative.

The final two adventures, covering 13 weeks between them, provided an epic conclusion to the season, just as there had been an epic beginning. By now, Patrick Troughton had settled into the part and there was much less of the dressing up and slight over playing evident in the first four stories.

The Faceless Ones was the last adventure to feature Ben and Polly and it was set in 1966 once more. Here producer Lloyd tried to persuade actress Pauline Collins to join the cast as new companion Samantha Briggs – and this part was written with that intention in mind.

Sam, as she was to be known, fell in very comfortably with Jamie and the Doctor and had a lot of potential, but Pauline Collins, mindful of her ambitions elsewhere, declined the repeated invitations to join *Doctor Who* and went on instead to a string of successes that included *The Liver Birds, Upstairs, Downstairs* and *No, Honestly*.

Season 24 stars Wanda Ventham and Donald Pickering both made appearances in the story, little realising that two decades later they would once again be cast in the same *Doctor Who* adventure.

The Faceless Ones wasn't a classic piece of *Doctor Who*, but it was still well made and very compelling. By now the Lloyd/Davis team had clearly got the programme back onto the rails from which it had so disastrously slipped the season before. Everyone realised that with its schedule, all the *Doctor Who* s couldn't be of the same standard, but Lloyd and Davis established that while this was true, a higher standard could still be achieved. *The Faceless Ones*, with its suspenseful but not very memorable plot, was living proof of this.

Both Lloyd and Davis were now thinking about moving on and their successors were being groomed to replace them. But they left behind them a tradition of quality and all-round excellence that made the season that followed one of the best ever and they are owed an enormous debt of thanks for regenerating the series so successfully in all departments.

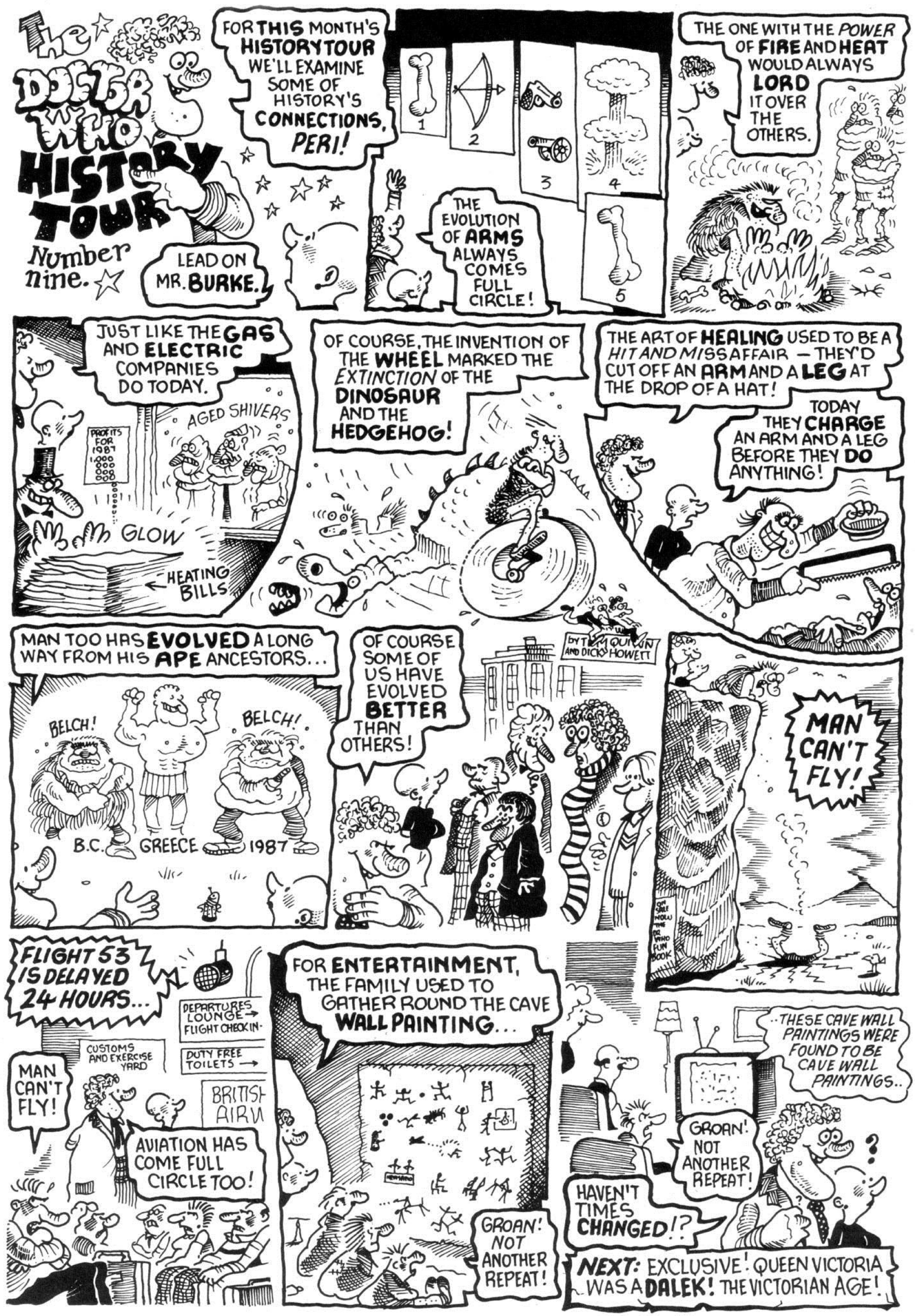
The season closed with *The Evil of the Daleks*. After the false start with Sam Briggs, Davis brought in the character of Victoria, named after his daughter, and Lloyd chose Deborah Watling to play her, remembering her from a *Doctor Who* audition the year before. This was a typically strong piece of casting and Victoria became a very important part of the programme's appeal in the episodes to come, as well as providing Jamie with a tailor-made sparring partner.

It was now confirmed that Terry Nation wished to remove his famous creations from the BBC, hoping to market them in their own show in the States, and worried that if they kept cropping up in *Doctor Who*, he would be typecast as a science fiction writer in England (a fear which seems to have been borne out).

David Whitaker once again furnished the script, and mindful that it might well be the last time the Daleks appeared in the series, he crafted for them a suitably drawn out and impressive finale, that included the terrifyingly mammoth Emperor Dalek and ingredients of which he was fond, magic and history. The way had been paved for the story at the end of *The Faceless Ones*, which was in the form of a cliffhanger leading directly into *The Evil of the Daleks*.

Much of the myth that has been built up in subsequent years around this concluding tale has at last been confirmed by the discovery of episode two. This story was an insight into just what makes a series like *Doctor Who* so popular, and in all departments, it boasts a gloss that leaves behind it many of the stories we have witnessed since.

Evil of the Daleks closed Season Four on a note of triumph, and it helped leave *Doctor Who* in a refreshed and reinvigorated state, such as might have seemed completely impossible only a year before. ◆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LEAD ON MR. BURKE.
1
2
3
4
5
THE EVOLUTION OF ARMS ALWAYS COMES FULL CIRCLE!
THE ONE WITH THE POWER OF FIRE AND HEAT WOULD ALWAYS LORD IT OVER THE OTHERS.
JUST LIKE THE GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANIES DO TODAY.
PROFITS FOR 1987 1,000 000 000
AGED SHIVERS
GLOW
HEATING BILLS
OF COURSE, THE INVENTION OF THE WHEEL MARKED THE EXTINCTION OF THE DINOSAUR AND THE HEDGEHOG!
THE ART OF HEALING USED TO BE A HIT AND MISS AFFAIR — THEY'D CUT OFF AN ARM AND A LEG AT THE DROP OF A HAT!
TODAY THEY CHARGE AN ARM AND A LEG BEFORE THEY DO ANYTHING!
MAN TOO HAS EVOLVED A LONG WAY FROM HIS APE ANCESTORS...
BELCH!
BELCH!
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OF COURSE SOME OF US HAVE EVOLVED BETTER THAN OTHERS!
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FLIGHT 53 IS DELAYED 24 HOURS...
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FOR ENTERTAINMENT, THE FAMILY USED TO GATHER ROUND THE CAVE WALL PAINTING...
GROAN! NOT ANOTHER REPEAT!
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GROAN! NOT ANOTHER REPEAT!
HAVEN'T TIMES CHANGED!?
NEXT: EXCLUSIVE! QUEEN VICTORIA WAS A DALEK! THE VICTORIAN AGE!

GALLIFREY GUARDIAN

No 131 DEC 1987

IT'S ALL HAPPENING . . .

For those who have made their names both in front of and behind the cameras. First off this month comes the sad news that former Troughton companion Wendy Padbury has been granted a 'quickie' divorce from her husband, the actor Melvyn Hayes.

They were married in 1974 and have two children and until recently (last year) were still working and living quite happily with each other. Since then, and for most of this year, Wendy has been appearing as one of the West End cast of the long-running comedy *No Sex Please, We're British!* which has just closed.

Meanwhile comes the news that **Tom Baker** has apparently been married for the last 18 months or so, to a television producer, but he refuses to disclose her name, as he is keen to preserve his privacy. Tom has also caused a stir recently with his refusal to do any publicity for his West End play *An Inspector Calls,* which has for obvious reasons annoyed the management of that production.

Another cast/management disagreement has occurred between *Faceless Ones* and *Time and the Rani* star **Donald Pickering,** who quit his part in the new Jeffrey Archer play *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* amid a flurry of publicity, stating it was too much of a strain to continue.

On a final note of upheaval, newspapers have been printing reports that **Kate O'Mara** will not be asked back to *Dynasty,* as she apparently angered bosses by choosing to do *King Lear* and *Doctor Who,* instead of more episodes of their soap.

Ex-producer **Graham Williams** has decided to give up his job as a television producer at Tyne Tees and open a country hotel with his wife. Williams, who has worked in virtually every sphere of drama television – and who gave Patrick Troughton his last recorded job in *Supergran* – has long been dissatisfied with the industry. Apart from three years of *Doctor Who,* he still has an unmade script for the show to his credit – *The Nightmare Fair* – which will now never be made.

Staying in TV, though, is former colleague **Gerald Blake,** who has been directing for *Coronation Street,* while current season directors **Nick Mallett** and **Andrew Morgan** have been working on *Spitting Image* and the recently screened *Knights of God* respectively. Finally, this month, ex-companion **Maureen O'Brien** is back in series TV, as a regular among the cast of the popular BBC drama *Casualty*.

THE FINAL STAGE

Is just approaching for season 24, with director Chris Clough having, as you read this, just completed the final dubbing on the last story.

Some of the music for story three has been recorded by the band who appear in the story, at the BBC's sound studios at Lime Grove. Incidentally, a bid has been put in for a *Doctor Who* season to be produced yet but we stress that this is not definite and that there are no details about who will be working on it or how many episodes it will comprise.

Sylvester McCoy, however, does hold a three-year contract and it is likely that another season will, if it occurs, cover the same number of episodes as the last two seasons. And next season will, of course, be silver jubilee year – 25 years of *Doctor Who.*

INITIAL REACTIONS . . .

Have started in the run-up to season 24. The August 31st edition of BBC1's children's magazine show *But First This* carried a ten-minute film report on the location work for *Delta and the Bannermen*. This comprised shots of the team at work in night sequences involving the Toll Master and the Bannermen, and interviews with Sylvester McCoy, Bonnie Langford and Ken Dodd. Throughout the week preceeding the first episode there were several trailers, one concentrating on all the season's guest stars.

Press reaction to the first episode has been distinctly mixed. The *Sunday Times* warned; "The Seventh Doctor takes the TARDIS controls with a combination of Magnus Pyke eccentricity and Bernie Winters gesture (he even plays the spoons). Even he believes he's drawn the short plank. Just wait till he discovers Bonnie Langford is still his assistant!"

The *London Standard,* said, under a title 'Call Yourself a Time Lord?': "Quite frankly I don't like it one little bit. *Doctor Who* is a programme that has always terrified me, an emotion that has not diminished with age. It is the prime cause, I am certain, of most children's psychological problems and in view of this should be banned instantly. The evil Rani instructed her minions, 'Leave the girl, it's the man I want.' A woman after my own heart. Rani has taken on the identity of Melanie – though why anyone in their right minds would choose to inflict this role upon themselves is quite beyond comprehension. In the great cliffhanger Mel was attacked by a cookie monster, cue bubble and with any luck that's the last we'll see of her."

Meanwhile, the *Sun* were running 20 Things You Didn't Know About Sylvester McCoy, which was trivial in the extreme.

On 16th September, *Points Of View* showed the regeneration sequence, after reading letters both praising and slating the show.

Finally in the press came a report that a Dalek enthusiast Perry Watkins from Aylesbury – who also likes customising cars – has spent two years creating a motorised Dalek from parts of a Mini, an Allegro and an Austin 1100. Around the body he stuck a framework of tubes, adding panels and silver globes that are actually hamster's running wheels. It has passed its MOT and is fully roadworthy, we are told, and has just been displayed at the Motor Fair at Earl's Court. ◆

interview

If ever there was a controversial choice for a *Doctor Who* companion, it was former child star Bonnie Langford as Melanie Bush. Richard Marson talked to her about her past career, her role in the series as a computer programmer, and about the world of *Doctor Who* in general . . .

Bonnie, bouncy and bright-eyed, alternately loved and loathed by TV and the popular press, is the epitome of the showbiz kid.

Winning Hughie Green's *Opportunity Knocks* at the age of four, training at the Italia Conti school and featuring on *This Is Your Life* before she had hit her quarter of a century are only some of the achievements in a sparkling career. Others include playing Violet Elizabeth Bott in the LWT children's show *Just William,* starring on stage in musicals such as *Cats* and *The Pirates of Penzance* and bringing a new dimension to the title role of *Peter Pan.*

Bonnie made time to talk to **DWM** during rehearsals for the latest addition to her long list of successes and came across as interesting and unassuming, completely the opposite to the image projected by the press, and indeed by Bonnie's effervescent performances. Had her career begun with the starstruck notions of a little girl? "I don't remember ever making a conscious decision to do anything. I'm not very good at making decisions and thank God, I didn't really have to make a decision about all of that; it just happened.

"My family are a very strange and wonderful sort of group. We're a complete unit and I think whatever any of us would have done we're just supportive to one another and to where our talents lie. It wasn't just because I went into the business that I was particularly encouraged. It's just that as a youngster, I got some extraordinary opportunities offered to me – things just came my way – and that was that.

"Things haven't ever happened immediately for me. You know how people say, 'Oh, I became an overnight success'. Well, in fact it's nearer when they say, 'Oh, it took me ten years to become an overnight success!' My intention – and I know my parents' intention – was never particularly for me to go on stage as a child. Certainly not to be a child performer because they had heard the awful stories about that as well. The majority of them are stories – they're not real things that go on, not nowadays. But it's more dramatic and people love scandal."

"I'm quite a methodical person."

It would be hard to see her as a bank clerk, or in any similar profession: "Er . . . No! Though funnily enough, I am quite a methodical person. I always believe that there are two words to show business – and business is the longer one. People are always surprised at the amount of paperwork there is, quite honestly."

Bonnie went on to talk about the difference between the normal child and the child performer: "Usually child performers are more disciplined, whereas people would probably feel the reverse and think they were absolute monsters. I always get comments like, 'You must have been a monster,' and 'I bet you were always getting up on the table and dancing at home.'

"But the last thing I would do would be to show off to anybody. I'd just die. I wasn't one of those kids and I'm not one of those people. You know how people can go to a party and then get up and do a sort of party piece? Well, I just hide in a corner. I can't bear it.

"Show business is a word which is often misused – people always think razzle dazzle – but if you're involved in acting, or singing, or dancing you often use that to hide behind. In a funny way, you're hiding behind a mask. You often find it's one of the hardest things to get an actor to say their name on stage, or to go and be themselves. You say, 'What is myself?'

"It's difficult to be precise about this. I love the excitement and the adrenalin of theatre, and of songs and dances and I'm a high energy person. I'm best when I'm using every bit of energy that's inside me. When I'm having to do a lot, I find that I can do a lot. When I'm in an inactive mood, forget it – it's like trying to raise the dead!

"I'm able to channel my energies – and it often gives other people inspiration and energy. It's very difficult in some ways, because people will often turn round and say, 'Oh, God, you're so cheerful – why are you so bright and breezy all the time?' and of course I don't want to be a one-dimension person. I don't want to do just one thing.

"People want the energy but they also like to be able to put you down for it."

"People want the energy but they also like to be able to turn round and put you down for it. They often also feel that you're like that all the time, or that if you don't want to be like that any more, then you must be desperately ashamed of what you've done in the past.

"For instance having done *Just William* ages ago, people always say, 'I bet you want to forget that.' Well, I don't want to forget it, because I loved it and it was great fun. I was only in a few episodes but it just caught the attention of everybody. It was very exciting and I was completely surprised by it. But I don't want to do that any more, I want to move on." ▶

Bonnie Langford

interview

◀ Bonnie has worked solidly since *Just William*. "Well, I think a lot of it has been luck. The majority of it has been luck – being in the right place at the right time. I was worried that the bubble would burst and I didn't do any more *Just William* – I could have continued doing Violet Elizabeth. I could have done commercials, I could have done movies and all sorts of things – but they were all as a precocious six-year-old child. I stopped and I didn't, because I knew that when I was sixteen or whenever, I might turn round and say, 'Hang on, I don't want to be playing a six-year-old any more!' and by then there would've been too big a jump, and it would be a very, very difficult bridge to get over.

"I stopped doing any kind of work for a long time – I really did. I just did pantomime – I was about the youngest *Cinderella* there's been, at fourteen – and the odd charity show just to keep me happy, and in that time I did my 'O' levels.

"That's why I went to stage school in the first place. So many people go to stage school, just for one reason – to do work in theatre and commercials and so on, but you don't get that much money in the bank as a child. You'd be surprised. You don't get that much money as an adult, either!

"I went to stage school to train – experience is something that's very important and valuable, but there's the right and the wrong kind of experience. That's why I did the work that I did – my parents for my sake couldn't turn down things like going to America for a year and doing *Gypsy* on Broadway. They had hard decisions to make because they didn't want me to turn round when I was sixteen and say, 'Look, I'm on the dole now and I'm never going to get a job. If only you'd allowed me to do my work when I was a child, I'd be all right now.'

"Often decisions were made for me by the fact that you're restricted to working forty days a year under the age of thirteen and then after thirteen to eighty days a year. It's terrible to have to say, 'No, I can't do that because I haven't got enough days.' You don't know what's round the corner – you might be offered a wonderful job and have to say, 'No, I can't.'"

Which of Bonnie's performing talents stretched and interested her most? "Physically, I suppose dancing. It takes the energy, the strength, the stamina, and all that. I know that I feel best in every sphere when I'm fit in my dancing, because it kind of keeps my whole mind in tune as well. But I wouldn't want to just dance and I find acting and singing mentally stimulating. That's what I need, too. There's no way I could do just one. When you're dancing there's a distance – and that's where the singing and acting comes in, because people like to have vocal contact with you."

Public recognition has been a major feature of Bonnie's life. Does this bother her? "I get a lot of it from building sites! And lorry drivers – you'd be amazed. Occasionally I do think, 'Oh, please don't look at me,' but it is lovely really and there are far more benefits from meeting people.

"People are very friendly and very nice. I do have 'I'll scream and scream' every so often – I had one today in fact – but that's extraordinary in itself, because it's eleven years ago that I did that show. It's frightening to think that it's eleven years ago – but I'm still here."

"I was quite a shock to their system, I think!"

Doctor Who fans are more protective than most and Bonnie was well aware of general opinion about her arrival: "I was quite a shock to their system, I think! I was aware vaguely what happened, because my agent is also Colin Baker's, but I didn't realise they

were quite so protective and possessive about their programme.

"They care very deeply about it, which is wonderful. And it *is* their programme. I think that they are restricting themselves in many ways – they should be a little more open and they shouldn't pre-judge things sometimes. They often put their opinions first and say, 'Oh, I'm not going to like that,' before they've sampled it. And this is what I got a little bit before I joined the programme.

"I got, 'Oh God, she's going to turn it into *42nd Street,'* which is silly, because something like this, which has been going on for twenty-four years now, is not going to be changed for me coming along. I wouldn't want them to, that's not what I'm about. I've been hired to play a part. It meant that all I could – and can – do is what I feel is my best and try and prove them wrong. I never think I've done my best – I'll always watch something and think I could have done that better. Sometimes I can be a bit self-destructive.

"I hated my first episode as Mel – and I had to watch it at the press call. I was sitting at the back and I loathed it. My first couple of scenes were me bobbing around with a skipping rope and I thought, 'Oh no, they're all going to think I'm going to be doing aerobics all the time. But that kind of started it off – they wanted energy and they wanted kind of a strong character. They wanted a character who wasn't dissimilar to me in some respects and at first, until one could get into the thing, I knew people would be saying, 'Oh, she's just being her,' – until the storyline was established and I could participate in that.

"It was especially difficult, as the character I played suddenly bounced out of nowhere. There was no explanation. I'm just a computer programmer from Pease Pottage who suddenly appears in the TARDIS! I don't actually know much about computers, except I tried to do a bit of research to find out about that.

"Funnily enough, a lot of the American fans wrote to me, saying that this character wasn't so much about the fact that she was a computer programmer but that they tend to be very dedicated people. A computer programmer will stay up for days and nights just to get some sort of program right. In many ways, I as Bonnie am similarly dedicated in my job, so I used that."

Bonnie outlined how the part arose: "I remember meeting John [Nathan-Turner] ages ago now at a restaurant a lot of people go to called Joe Allen's. I'd been chatting to Faith Brown, who'd just been in a *Doctor Who* and I said, 'I'd love to do one of those, that'd be fun,' and obviously some seeds were sown there. Literally a year or so later, I got this phone call from my agent, saying John Nathan-Turner would like me to meet him in his office.

"I went down there and he showed me this sort of character analysis of Mel and he said, 'What do you think?' I said, 'That's a nice character, sounds fun.' So he said, 'Well, would you like to do it?' And that was it, really. That was November/December and I really didn't think much more about it, because I was opening at the end of the week in *Peter Pan*. John came to my opening night and a month or so later the press suddenly started to turn up at the stage door. I thought, 'What have I done?' and then there was this sudden panic to do a press call for *Doctor Who*.

"*Doctor Who* isn't as strenuous a timetable as a show and I can live at home in London with my family. After the first episodes, I did more *Peter Pan* and then John phoned me and said, 'We're going to do another series, does it fit in?' And it did, it all fitted in and it was fine."

Bonnie has a typically methodical approach to her part: "What I do is to write out in very precise form the lines that I have, together with each scene and what is happening. It helps me to learn it and it helps as the scripts are ▶

◀ often quite hard to work out. I find that I get lost – for example with this block, we're doing the last scene first, the last scene of the whole season and next block, we'll do the beginning of the third and fourth story. It's a case of, 'Which planet are we on now and where are we going?'

"You don't want every beginning and end of a story to be the same and they so easily could be. If I write it out, I find that when they say, 'We're doing episode two, scene twenty-one,' and I think, 'Well, what's that in English?' I can sit back and check and then I can say, 'Ah – I've met this monster by then, I'm trying to work out here how to go along this corridor. I've lost the Doctor so I'm a bit panicked.' I use that to keep a through line, though a lot of it is mental notes, too."

And what of working with two different Doctors? "I haven't consciously thought, 'Oh, he doesn't play it the way Colin does.' I suppose they're different. At first I think he's some kind of nut!' But then I think a rapport just kind of builds up. I'd worked with both Colin and Sylvester before and they're great friends of mine, so I didn't think, 'Oh, I've got to change the way I play that.' Things just happen and I hope we can automatically build a rapport that isn't restricted. I wouldn't say I'd noticed a difference, but then again I hope there is a difference."

What about Kate O'Mara's imitation of Bonnie. Had this caused laughs? "Oh, it was wonderful. She made me do lines and say her lines and then she'd copy them. It was quite, quite weird and one of the weird things was I was standing off the set and there she was in my costume and with a wig and everything saying, 'But Doctor . . .' and it really made me giggle.

"She was doing a scene as me and they were trying to work out these different moves she was doing and the cameras as well, and one of the cameramen turned round and said, 'Well, when Bonnie goes up here . . .' and I was saying, 'It's not Bonnie, I'm here. That's Kate!'

"We were having rather a hoot and it was very strange, because it was like looking in a mirror. We have a lot of fun, but there's an element of seriousness running underneath it, too. It's no good guffawing your way through the show. Those are your mind games.

"There are some great out-takes. We had a party the other day and they showed them. Sylvester and I have a hoot sometimes. The episode that Kate was in there was a scene in this brain chamber and it was quite a climactic scene. Kate had this mile-long speech to do, all about chronons and stratospheres and God alone knows what else. She had learnt it all wonderfully.

"Sylvester has this terrible way of being able to look at you and then you just crease. He was just kind of looking at her, desperately serious – he wasn't doing anything, but we couldn't help bursting into giggles. We tried so hard to get through that scene. Sylvester and Kate had this great deep discussion that was getting desperately technical and after about an hour of not having anything to say, I had to pipe up with the line, 'The cretacious age'. It just set us all off – it was impossible, because once you get the giggles, it's very hard to stop."

"Mel is quite fashionable and quite practical."

What about the costumes worn by Mel?

"The designers say, 'This is the idea,' and then we try things. Mel is quite fashionable and quite practical and the Doctor has a very big wardrobe, so we assume that Mel has overtaken his wardrobe somewhat.

"Every time I go out to film it pours with rain and I end up in a puddle – we had a lovely week in Wales where the weather was gorgeous but other than that, it's been freezing cold, wet, miserable. I have shivered. Horrendous. No costumes can protect you.

"The worst was on location in a swimming pool for the second story. I mean, the temperature was like a bad joke – I was turning blue. The difficulty was I had to stay there, because of continuity of shots and the need to do everything from different angles, so it wasn't just a case of in and out. That would have been bearable – but this was like a nightmare, made worse by the fact that in the script I had to be saying lines like, 'It's lovely when you're in, and you couldn't say them through gritted, chattering teeth, shivering away. It had to look convincing. That was a lot of acting, I can tell you."

Every *Doctor Who* companion has to deal with special effects. "They're very good, the visual effects guys, and they explain everything to you, but it can still be a bit hairy. In the first story I had to do this bit in a bubble, and it had to spin around. That might not sound very daring but in fact it could be very dangerous, especially as all there was to support you was a flimsy pole.

"I was worried when we came to do this that it would collapse and I'd be hurt. They kind of dismissed this as they wanted to get it done, but eventually it was tried and it did go wrong, which was alarming. Normally though, they know what they're doing and you can rely on that."

Sadly, in these days of shorter *Doctor Who* seasons, it seems we won't be able to enjoy the talents of the programme's regulars for as long as in the past. After appearing in 20 episodes, Mel will have been and gone, already a part of the programme's history.

"Lines with four lines in them are excruciating."

Bonnie finished by talking about leaving the series: "There are limitations to the part and I don't want to go on doing it forever. Sometimes it's quite difficult, actually – it's a lot harder often to say a short line. Lines with four words in them are excruciating – you sort of pop up and say, 'But Doctor . . .' and it's quite hard.

"You keep thinking, 'People are going to be so sick of this loon with the red hair running around saying, 'Doctor!' and I don't want the character to be like that. I don't want to be just a funny old sidekick.

"It's been a very happy series for me. I wouldn't point out one that I've enjoyed most – they've all been great fun in their different ways. I didn't especially want Mel married or killed off – I think what they've got is quite inventive."

After *Doctor Who,* Bonnie went straight back into live theatre with the lead role in a production of *Charley Girl:* "That takes me through to February/March and after that I don't know. I don't really like to plan too far ahead – of course, I like to think I'll have security, but I like the wandering element, too, which is why the press always seize on me not having a boyfriend. I'm a career girl, and though that doesn't overrule my personal life completely it's still very much my priority. There's a lot I still want to do!" ◆

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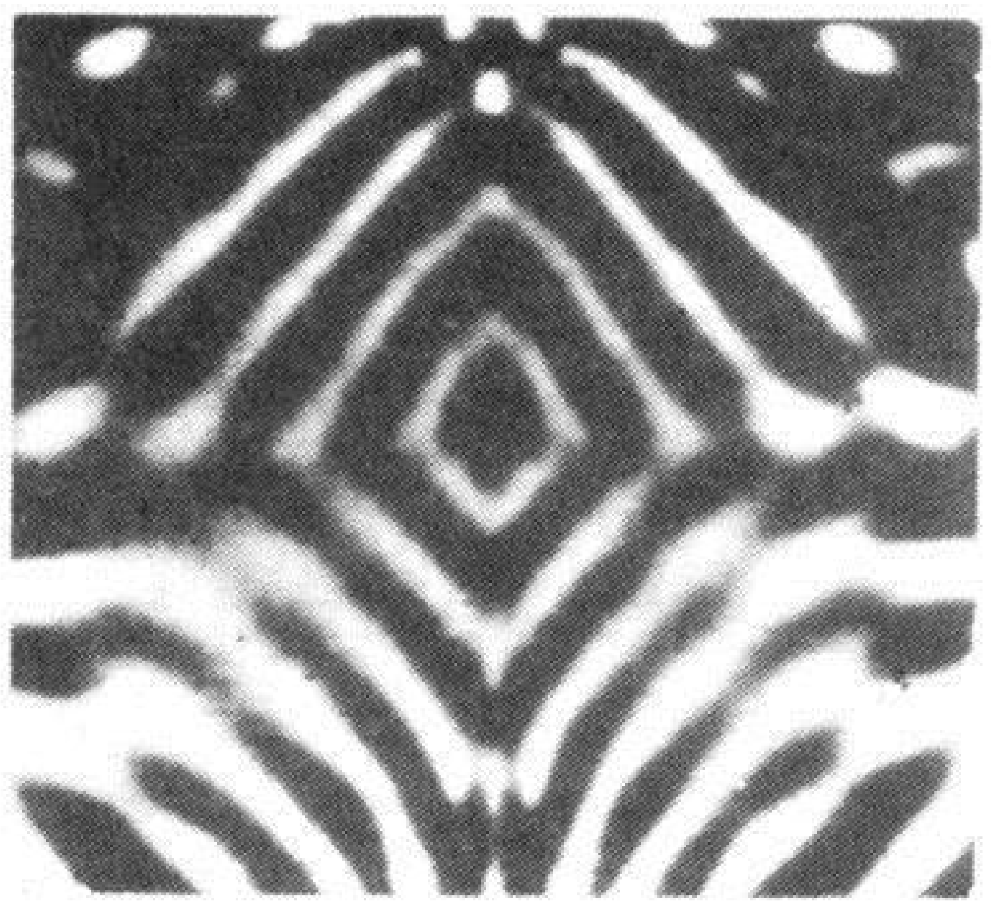


FORGOTTEN RADIO WHO

Denis Tarrant of Westcliff, requests, 'Please supply more details about the 1976 radio programme, especially the title.'

If you thought that *Slipback* was the first time *Doctor Who* has been transferred to radio then you are much mistaken, for in 1976 a one-off programme was broadcast for BBC Schools in the geography series *Exploration Earth*. This formed the third part of the Autumn Term for 1976 and the programme in question was subtitled *The Time Machine* and was broadcast on Monday, 4th October, on Radio 4 VHF at 2.00pm. The programme was 20 minutes long and starred Tom Baker as the Doctor, Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith and John Westbrook as Megron. Special Sounds were by Dick Mills, Production was by David Lyttle, it was written by Bernard Venables and Produced by Mike Howarth.

Because the programme was a schools production, it was intended to give an insight into the creation of the Earth, and what better vehicle to travel back in time with than the TARDIS?

The story opens with the Doctor and Sarah in the TARDIS, when suddenly the steering goes wrong and they plunge back through time. A strange force stops the TARDIS 4,500 million years ago in Earth's past. The Doctor and Sarah get into a handy space capsule and leave the TARDIS to see the Earth being created from boiling gases. They return to the TARDIS and the Doctor programmes it to follow Earth's development.

Next time they stop off, the Earth is a ball of molten rock and gases in the process of cooling off. As they watch, an echoing voice demands to know who they are. This is Megron, Chief of Karions, Lord of Chaos, who has taken over this formless ball and now nothing can alter its disorder. The Doctor points out that order is coming whether Megron likes it or not, as a rock crust is forming and out of the chaos is coming order. Megron rages at this and the Doctor and Sarah slip back to the TARDIS.

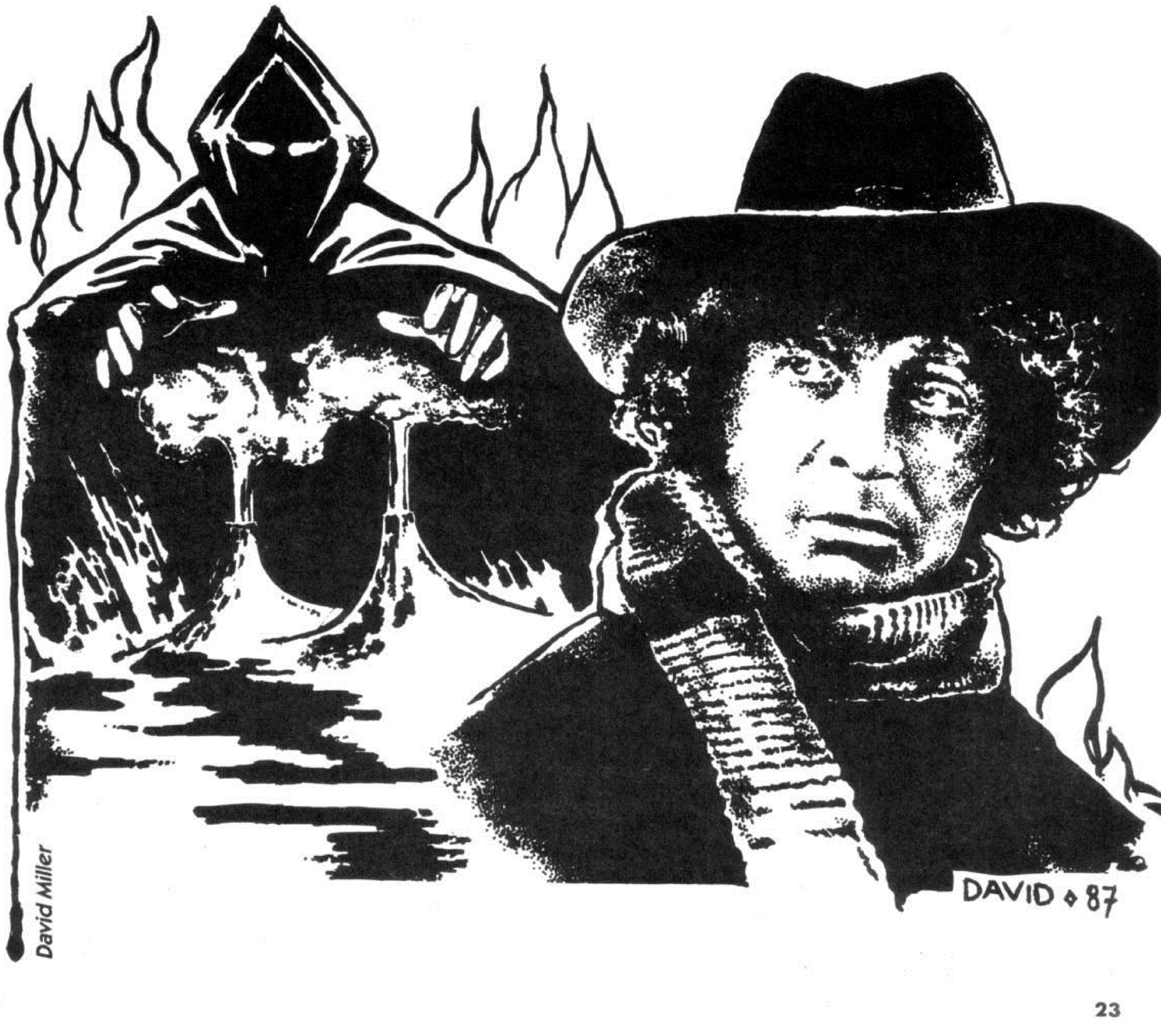
At their next stopping off point, the Earth is steadily being forged from massive eruptions and earthquakes. The Doctor compresses time and they watch as seas, rivers and continents are formed. Megron appears again and once more asserts that order will never come out of this chaos, but the Doctor rebukes him, saying that even now there is a little oxygen being generated and before too long there will be life. Megron rages once more, and the Doctor and Sarah leave.

The TARDIS finally halts in an idyllic landscape of trees, flowers, birds and animals, fresh air and bright sunlight. Sarah is very impressed and the Doctor comments that it is incredible what oxygen can do – it has made all this life possible. Megron is still about, though and the Doctor decides that it is time he was banished forever. He challeges Megron to pit his strength by Telepathic Will Displacement. The Doctor wins this contest easily and Megron is banished from Earth for good.

As well as the Doctor and Sarah, the broadcast had many other references to *Doctor Who*, from the opening and closing theme music, to the mention of Time Lords and the TARDIS interior sound effects. It worked very well, both as a means of informing the listener and as an entertaining radio drama – everything that *Doctor Who* should be, in fact.

Send your questions about Doctor Who to our compiler David Howe of D.W.A.S., at: MDB, Doctor Who Magazine, 23 Redan Place, London W2 4SA.

With thanks to Dick Mills.



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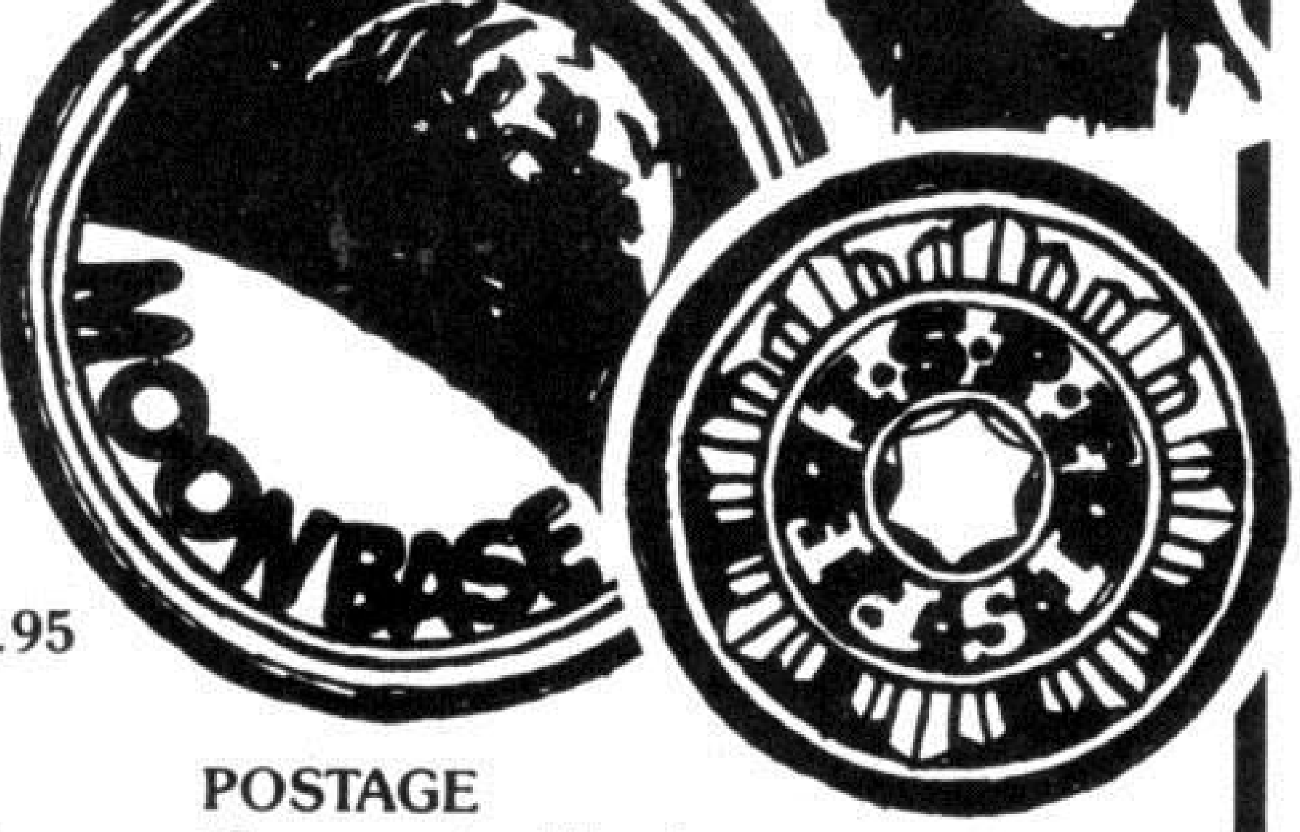

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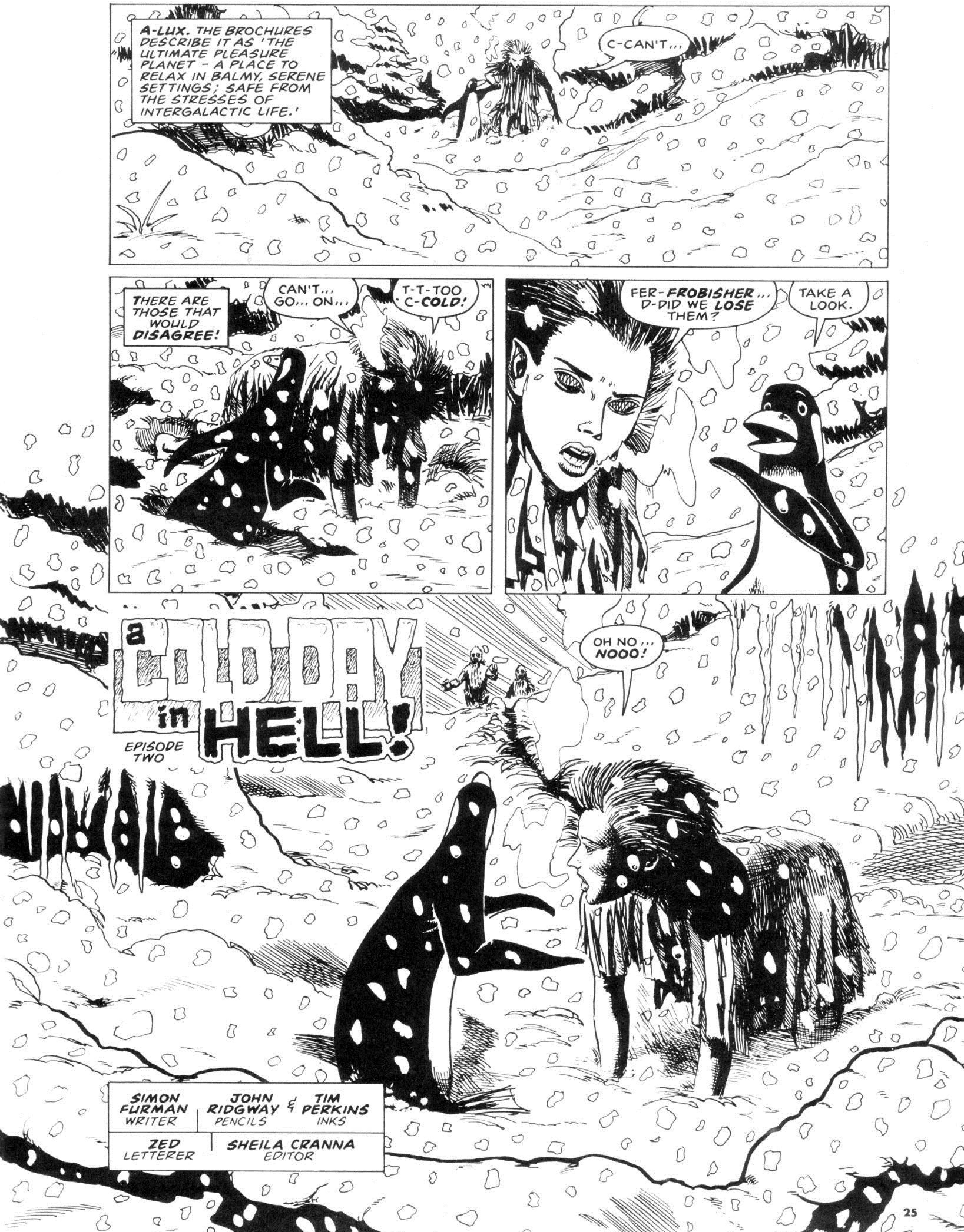
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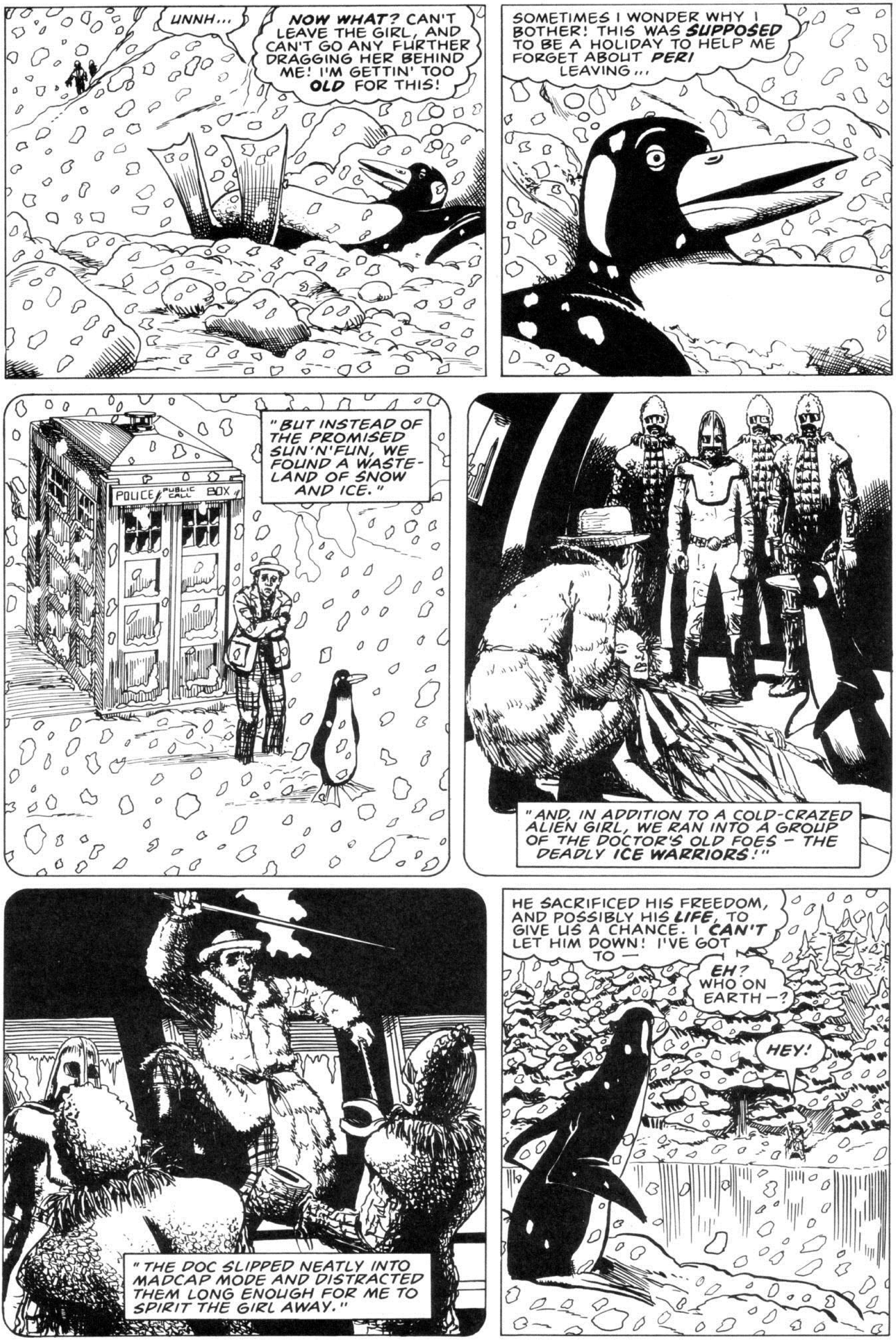
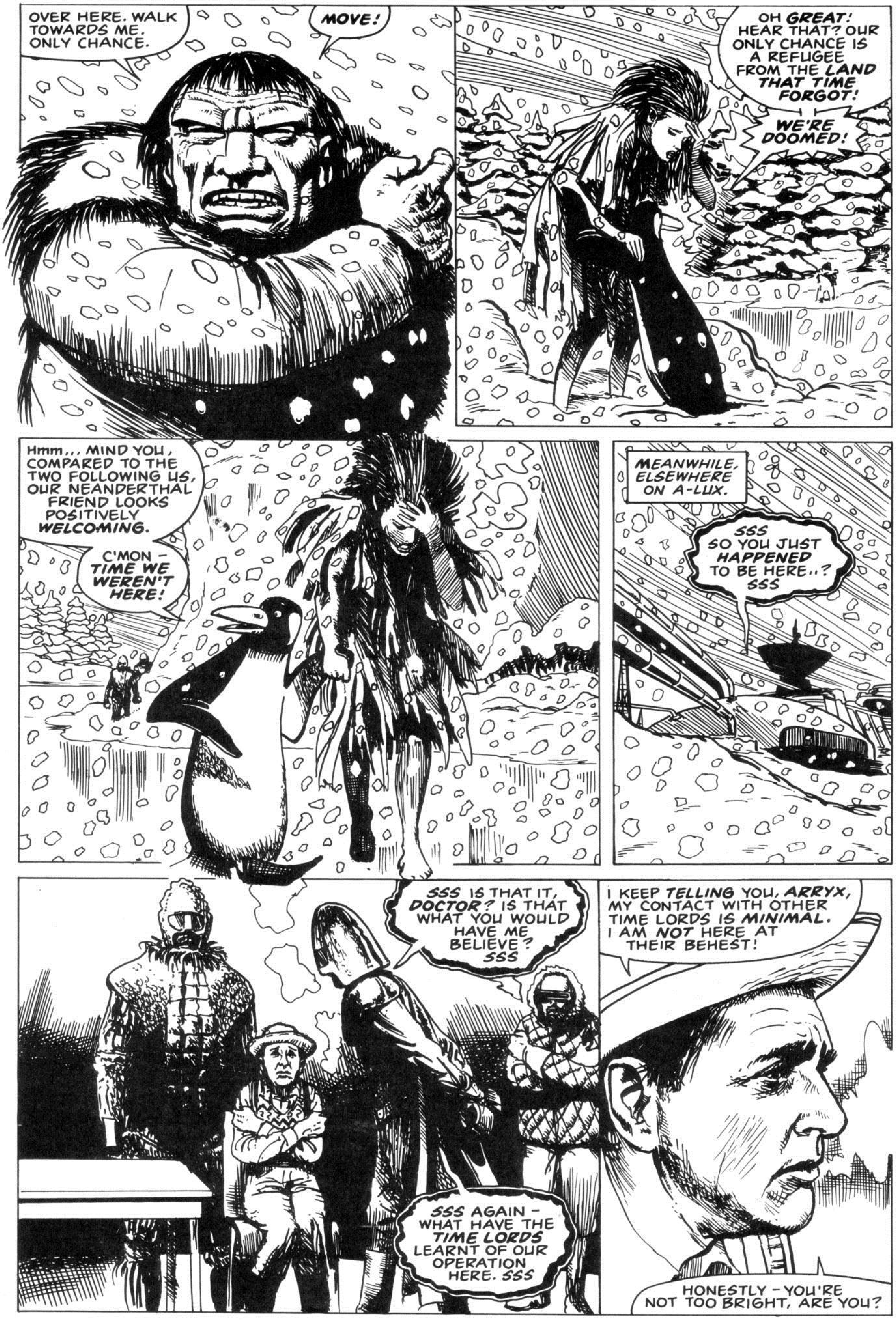
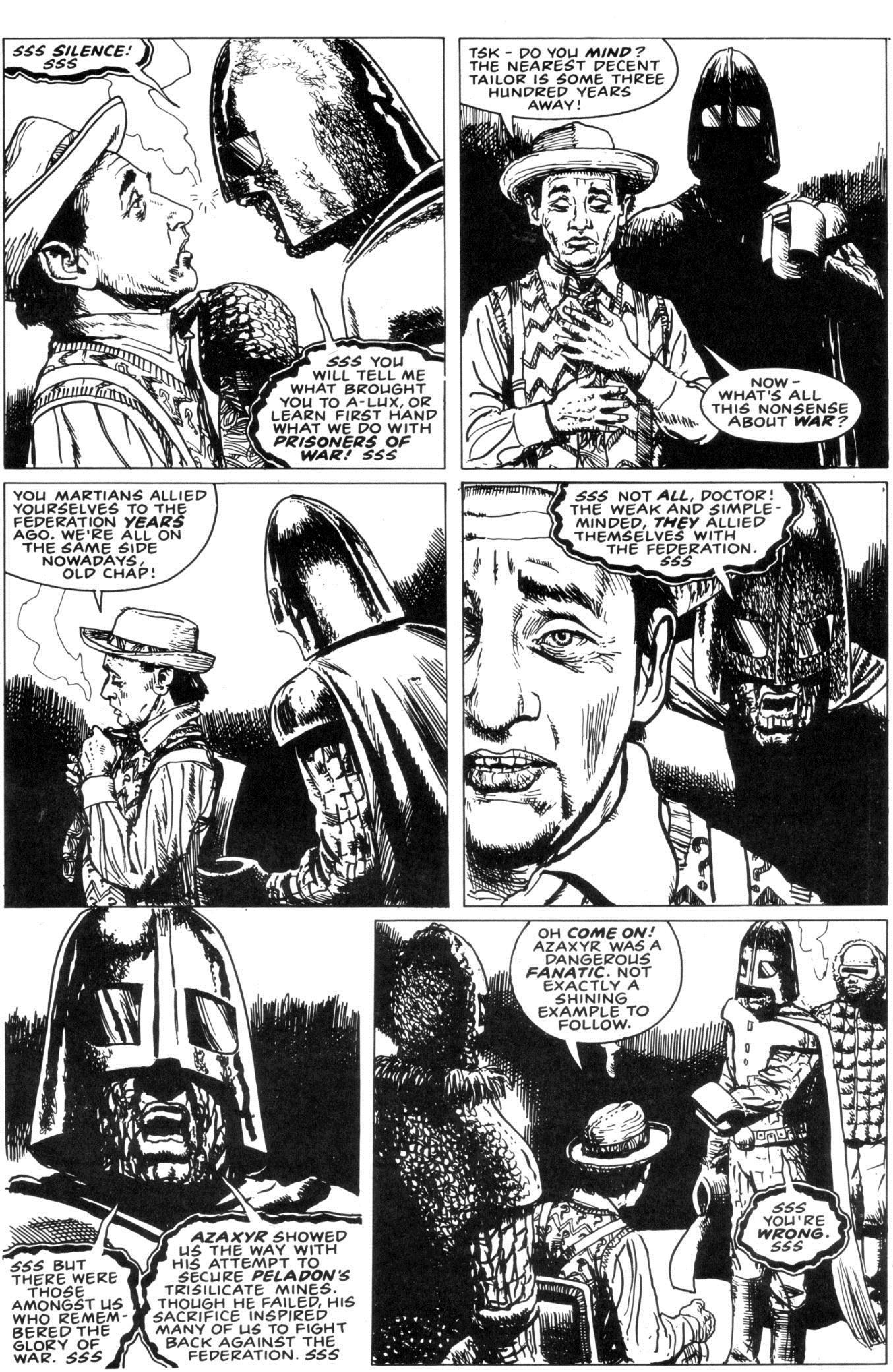
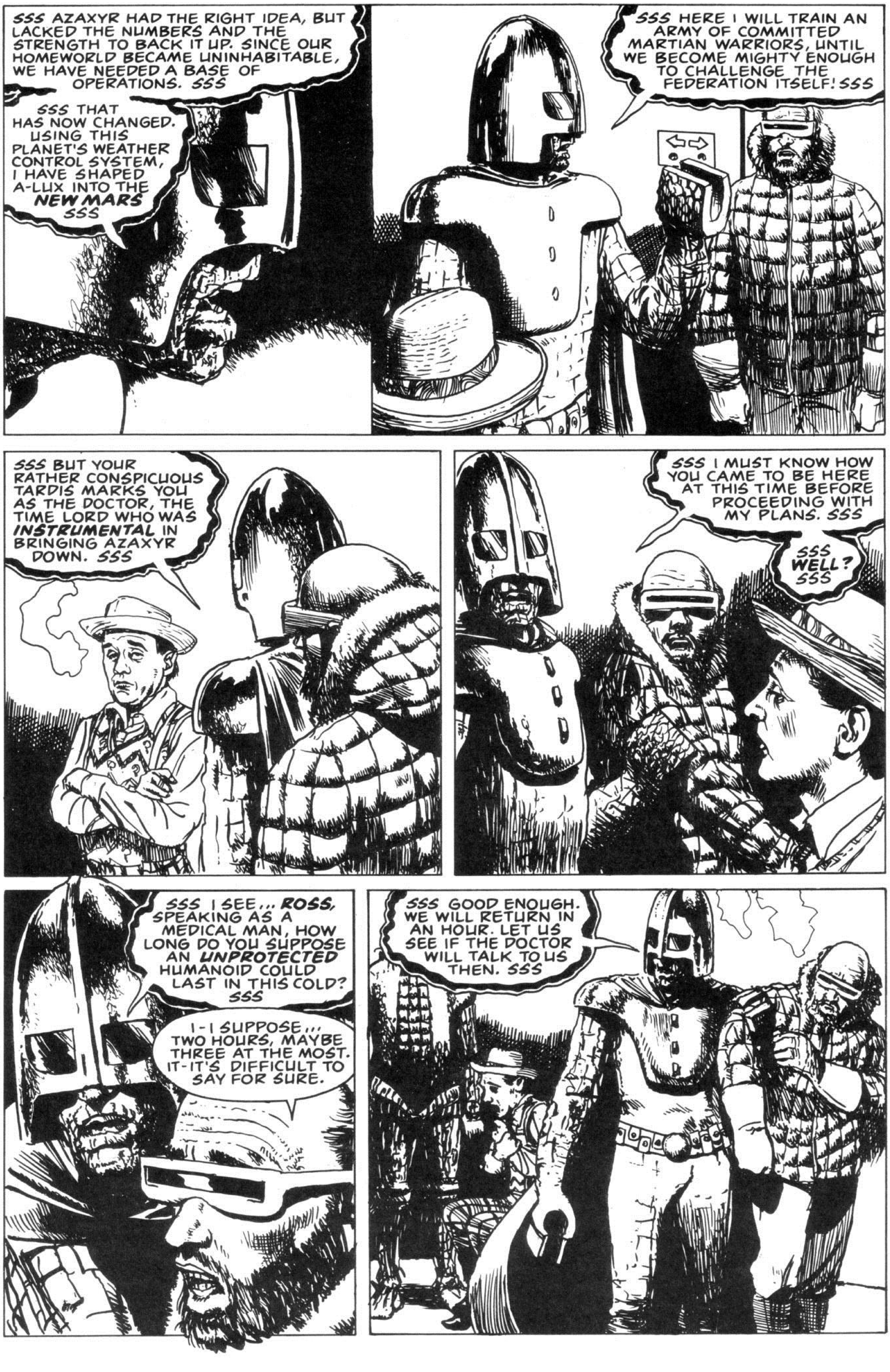
SSS DESTROY THEM! SSS
SHUSH!
SHUSH!
SHAAAA
AIEEE!
NUUUH... TH-THAT NOISE HEAD-HEAD SPINNING... CAN'T...
AAAAA
NNF!
OOF!

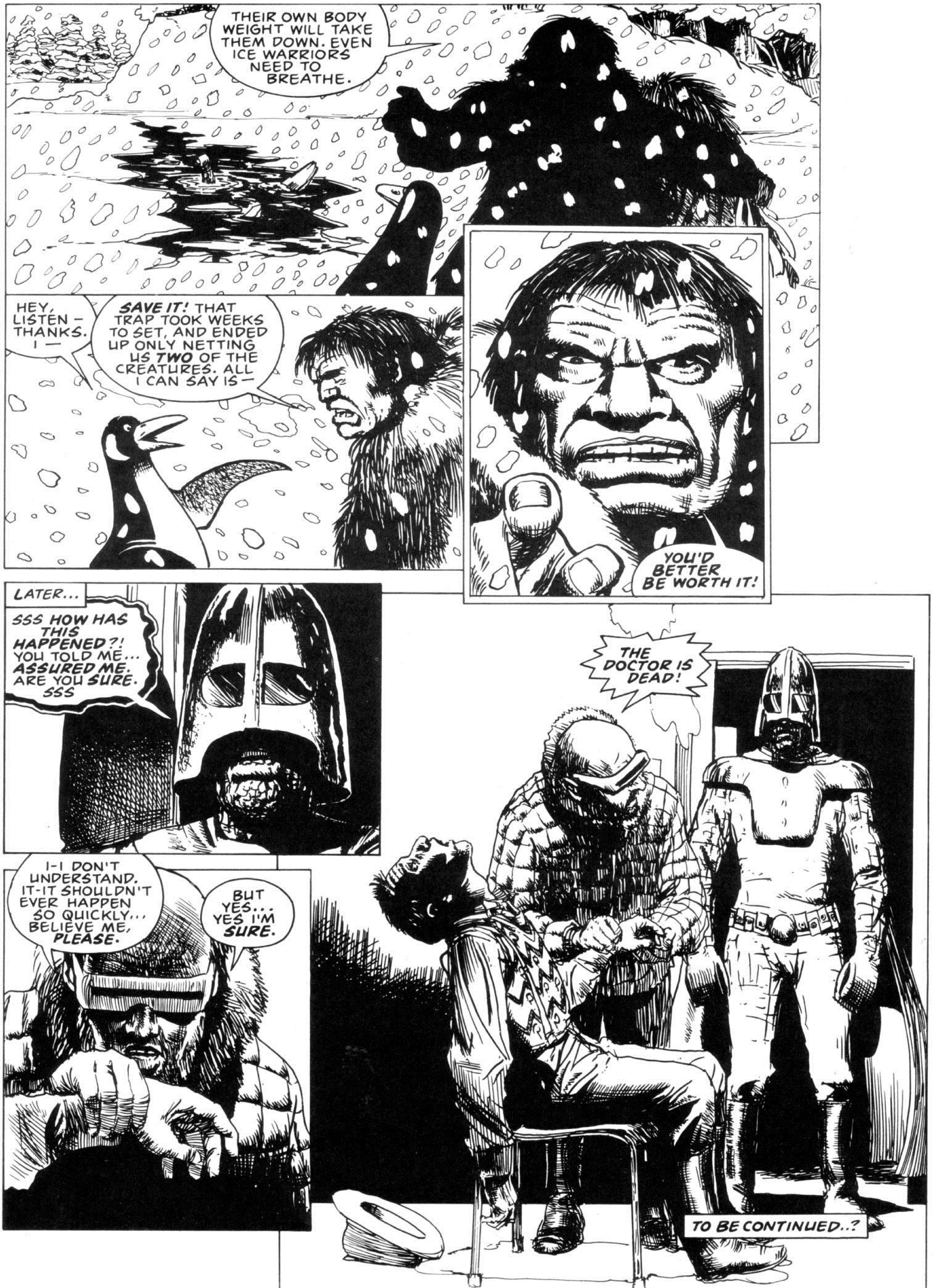

UNNH...
NOW WHAT? CAN'T LEAVE THE GIRL, AND CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER DRAGGING HER BEHIND ME! I'M GETTIN' TOO OLD FOR THIS!
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I BOTHER! THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A HOLIDAY TO HELP ME FORGET ABOUT PERI LEAVING...
"BUT INSTEAD OF THE PROMISED SUN'N'FUN, WE FOUND A WASTE-LAND OF SNOW AND ICE."
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
"AND, IN ADDITION TO A COLD-CRAZED ALIEN GIRL, WE RAN INTO A GROUP OF THE DOCTOR'S OLD FOES – THE DEADLY ICE WARRIORS!"
"THE DOC SLIPPED NEATLY INTO MADCAP MODE AND DISTRACTED THEM LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO SPIRIT THE GIRL AWAY."
HE SACRIFICED HIS FREEDOM, AND POSSIBLY HIS LIFE, TO GIVE US A CHANCE. I CAN'T LET HIM DOWN! I'VE GOT TO –
EH? WHO ON EARTH –?
HEY!


OVER HERE. WALK TOWARDS ME. ONLY CHANCE.
MOVE!
OH GREAT! HEAR THAT? OUR ONLY CHANCE IS A REFUGEE FROM THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT!
WE'RE DOOMED!
Hmm,,, MIND YOU, COMPARED TO THE TWO FOLLOWING US, OUR NEANDERTHAL FRIEND LOOKS POSITIVELY WELCOMING.
C'MON - TIME WE WEREN'T HERE!
MEANWHILE, ELSEWHERE ON A-LUX.
SSS SO YOU JUST HAPPENED TO BE HERE..? SSS
SSS IS THAT IT, DOCTOR? IS THAT WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE ME BELIEVE? SSS
SSS AGAIN - WHAT HAVE THE TIME LORDS LEARNT OF OUR OPERATION HERE. SSS
I KEEP TELLING YOU, ARRYX, MY CONTACT WITH OTHER TIME LORDS IS MINIMAL. I AM NOT HERE AT THEIR BEHEST!
HONESTLY - YOU'RE NOT TOO BRIGHT, ARE YOU?


SSS SILENCE! SSS
SSS YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO A-LUX, OR LEARN FIRST HAND WHAT WE DO WITH **PRISONERS OF WAR!** SSS
TSK - DO YOU **MIND**? THE NEAREST DECENT TAILOR IS SOME THREE HUNDRED YEARS AWAY!
NOW - WHAT'S ALL THIS NONSENSE ABOUT **WAR**?
YOU MARTIANS ALLIED YOURSELVES TO THE FEDERATION **YEARS** AGO. WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE NOWADAYS, OLD CHAP!
SSS NOT **ALL**, DOCTOR! THE WEAK AND SIMPLE-MINDED, **THEY** ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH THE FEDERATION. SSS
SSS BUT THERE WERE THOSE AMONGST US WHO REMEMBERED THE GLORY OF WAR. SSS
AZAXYR SHOWED US THE WAY WITH HIS ATTEMPT TO SECURE **PELADON'S** TRISILICATE MINES. THOUGH HE FAILED, HIS SACRIFICE INSPIRED MANY OF US TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE FEDERATION. SSS
OH **COME ON!** AZAXYR WAS A DANGEROUS **FANATIC**. NOT EXACTLY A SHINING EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW.
SSS YOU'RE **WRONG.** SSS


SSS AZAXYR HAD THE RIGHT IDEA, BUT LACKED THE NUMBERS AND THE STRENGTH TO BACK IT UP. SINCE OUR HOMEWORLD BECAME UNINHABITABLE, WE HAVE NEEDED A BASE OF OPERATIONS. SSS
SSS THAT HAS NOW CHANGED. USING THIS PLANET'S WEATHER CONTROL SYSTEM, I HAVE SHAPED A-LUX INTO THE **NEW MARS** SSS
SSS HERE I WILL TRAIN AN ARMY OF COMMITTED MARTIAN WARRIORS, UNTIL WE BECOME MIGHTY ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE THE FEDERATION ITSELF! SSS
SSS BUT YOUR RATHER CONSPICUOUS TARDIS MARKS YOU AS THE DOCTOR, THE TIME LORD WHO WAS ***INSTRUMENTAL*** IN BRINGING AZAXYR DOWN. SSS
SSS I MUST KNOW HOW YOU CAME TO BE HERE AT THIS TIME BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH MY PLANS. SSS
SSS **WELL?** SSS
SSS I SEE... ***ROSS***, SPEAKING AS A MEDICAL MAN, HOW LONG DO YOU SUPPOSE AN ***UNPROTECTED*** HUMANOID COULD LAST IN THIS COLD? SSS
I-I SUPPOSE... TWO HOURS, MAYBE THREE AT THE MOST. IT-IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY FOR SURE.
SSS GOOD ENOUGH. WE WILL RETURN IN AN HOUR. LET US SEE IF THE DOCTOR WILL TALK TO US THEN. SSS

MEANWHILE...
HURRY!
OKAY. THEY'RE CLEAR...
BLOW IT, FUBB!
KACHOOSH!
KACHOOSH!
REEEEK!


THEIR OWN BODY WEIGHT WILL TAKE THEM DOWN. EVEN ICE WARRIORS NEED TO BREATHE.
HEY, LISTEN – THANKS. I —
SAVE IT! THAT TRAP TOOK WEEKS TO SET, AND ENDED UP ONLY NETTING US TWO OF THE CREATURES. ALL I CAN SAY IS —
YOU'D BETTER BE WORTH IT!
LATER...
SSS HOW HAS THIS HAPPENED?! YOU TOLD ME... ASSURED ME. ARE YOU SURE. SSS
THE DOCTOR IS DEAD!
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT-IT SHOULDN'T EVER HAPPEN SO QUICKLY... BELIEVE ME, PLEASE.
BUT YES... YES I'M SURE.
TO BE CONTINUED..?

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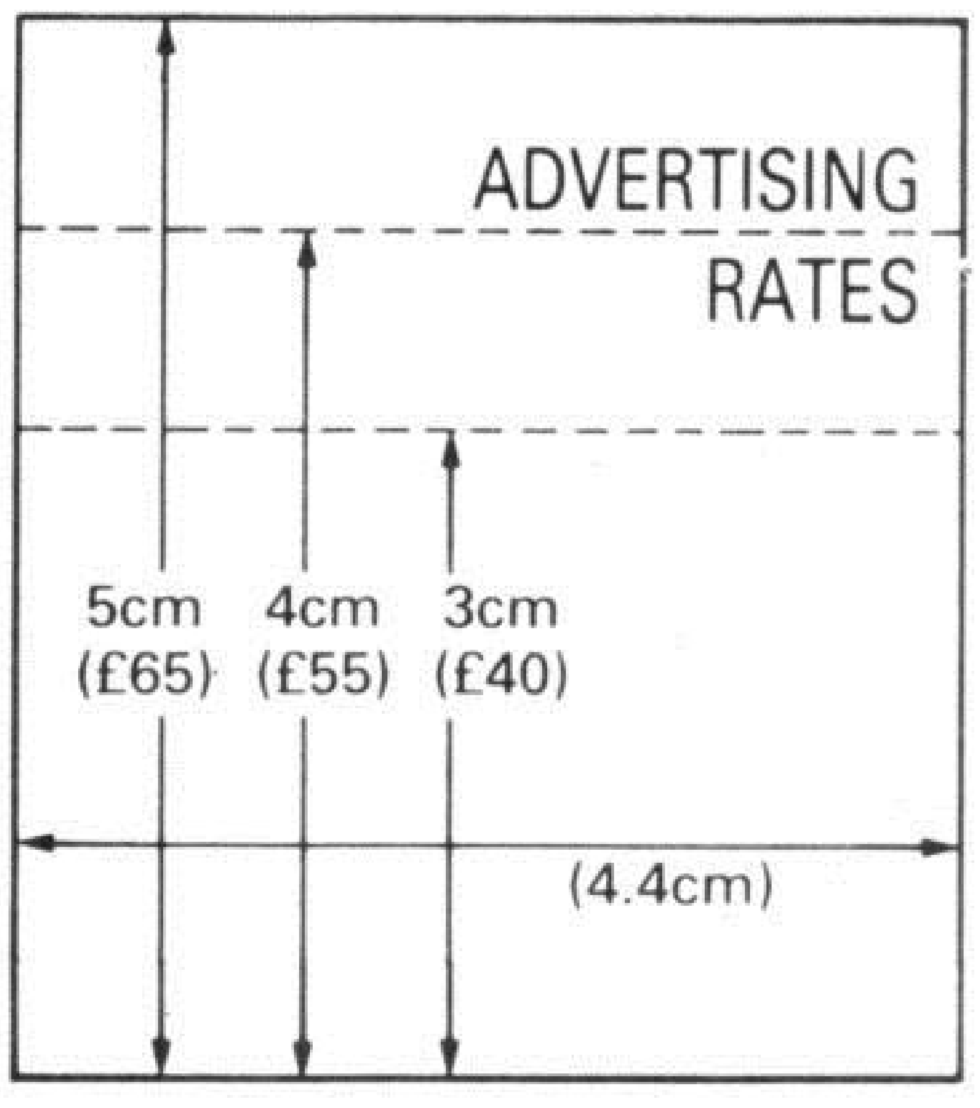

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Coming up Trumps

Street-wise and trendy, new companion Ace is all set to bring a breath of fresh air into the TARDIS!

New companions join the series in all kinds of different ways; sometimes the production team have carefully planned the newcomer's arrival for months but there have also been several cases of a companion arriving through a combination of the producer liking an actor in a part not originally intended to continue and circumstances allowing that character to be taken on board full-time. This was the case with Frazer Hines' Jamie, Lalla Ward's Romana (though she took on a part already established by Mary Tamm), and Sarah Sutton's Nyssa.

The latest arrival in the TARDIS has followed the same pattern and has joined new Doctor Sylvester McCoy at the last moment. Director Chris Clough, soon to be interviewed in this magazine, recounts the arrival of Ace: "We realised that it was always possible to take Ace on board if Bonnie didn't want to carry on. J N-T was thinking along those lines when we cast her and we saw a lot of girls for the part.

"Bonnie decided quite late in the day that she wouldn't be continuing as Mel, which was of course her prerogative, and was all tied up with the contractual side of things. The problem was that *Delta* was going on location mid-to-end of June and then we came back and five days later, I started rehearsals on *Dragonfire*. So I basically had to cast that before I started on *Delta*.

"Now there's a good female part in that, too (played by Sara Griffiths) – and both Ray and Ace were in a similar sort of age group. One was supposed to be Welsh and the other cockney, so we had a sort of double bite at the cherry there in casting for youth and freshness."

The girl chosen for the part of Ace was Sophie Aldred, and *Doctor Who* is her first appearance in front of television cameras. To get her Equity card, all-important to actors looking for work, she had taken her own kind of cabaret on a tour of pubs and other venues for a year. But working in TV was a different matter.

Sophie told us: "The first time I'd been in a TV studio was the first recording for *Doctor Who*. It was pretty nervy – I kept wondering what was going on and the technology is very impressive but a bit daunting. But everyone was really friendly and it went quite quickly."

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Sophie won the part, as is often the case with the *Doctor Who* girls, on the basis of the brightness and verve she demonstrated.

At the press call in front of the BBC's Television Centre, and later during the final recording when we were able to have a quick word, Sophie talked about the part of Ace and how she will be playing it: "She's quite bright and aggressive and she doesn't take no for an answer. Like all the *Doctor Who* girls, she tends to act or speak first and then get herself into trouble, but I wouldn't say she is going to be a screamer.

"She's a bit of a rough diamond, which is reflected by her endless use of slang that will probably get on the Doctor's nerves, and she's a bit of a tomboy. I'd certainly say she was a feminist, too, and she doesn't take kindly to being patted on the head by the Doctor. I think she's great, and terrific fun to play."

Sophie is particularly fond of her costume, which is very up-to-date and shows Ace's street style at its most highly developed. At first she says she was a bit self-conscious about the thigh-hugging cycling shorts but now she thinks they're much better than a mini skirt!

Accompanying the shorts are a pair of "dead trendy" boots and a kind of Beastie Boys jacket, adorned with a whole collection of badges from Sophie's own collection. These include two of the famed *Blue Peter* badges, the normal sort and a silver one, "which I won in 1971 when I was eleven and has been the envy of friends ever since".

Sophie hopes to change the badges regularly on the jacket if it stays part of her costume, and no doubt viewers will soon be sending in their contributions.

Though it is always a sad moment when one established *Doctor Who* companion bows out in favour of a newcomer, it's reassuring when you have some signs of an encouraging successor. Sophie's Ace is likely to be a big hit, simply because she is not studied and sophisticated in front of the camera, but natural and unaffected. And in the best traditions of all the *Doctor Who* girls, she has the potential to form an acerbic but adventurous partnership with the Doctor himself, in which it'll be hard to predict who has the last word.

◇ **Richard Marson**

The *Blue Peter* office has been informed of their time-travelling award-winner, so keep an eye on the show around the time of Ace's debut – and don't forget to catch Sophie on *Corners* on Saturday afternoons.

Doctor Who
MAGAZINE